

MACLEAN'S

ONE DEAD COW
And the whole country
feels the pain

THE NEW BACK PAGE
Paul Wells moves in—
and dissects the Tories

BARBARIAN INVASIONS
Brian D. Johnson on Denys
Arcand's Cannes triumph

HOW TO HEAL NATURE

A NEW STUDY WARNS THAT ONLY WITH
IMMEDIATE ACTION CAN THREATENED
SPECIES—including polar bears—BE SAVED



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THE NEW UNHOLY TRINITY

But mad cow disease, SARS and West Nile are puny, compared to past ills

WHILE RESEARCHING my family history years ago, I discovered that I should, by rights, have many more cousins on my father's side than I am. My grandfather's brother had, I learned, two sons and two daughters, all of whom died within a two-year span in 1994 and 1995 in Montreal. I don't know the cause—and that's not all that surprising, because it could have been anything, from smallpox to tuberculosis to pneumonia to any of the other lethal diseases that killed off large numbers of people then as an almost routine thing. Well into the 20th century, epidemics causing sudden deaths were still alarmingly frequent. The 1918 Spanish flu epidemic killed between 20 and 40 million people worldwide, that total eclipses the number of people killed during the entire First World War.

A knowledge of history is particularly useful for two reasons: knowing our past puts the present into perspective, and helps us prepare for the future. It's tempting to declare, as we live through the untidy truth of SARS, West Nile virus, and mad cow disease, that we're in an unprecedented, exceptionally difficult time of hardship. But measured against virtually any time in the first half of the last century, these are mild days. The number of people directly affected by SARS and West Nile is minimal—and as for mad cow disease, there are a number of good reasons why Canadians should still feel free to eat Alberta beef without worries (page 16). For most people, the real damage is mental—in the form of the economic hardship, confronting everyone from Alberta farmers to beef exporters to people in the tourism business, resulting from the blizzard of negative publicity.

So we should put present events clearly in perspective, even as we shift our concern toward what all this means for the future. As Toronto author and academic Barry Duncan writes in her prescient book *Havoc the 1918 Flu*, "The world is much more vulnerable to the eruption and spread of infectious disease today than in 1918, as people travel

increasingly, travel more rapidly, and visit many more places than ever before." Duncan, whose book was written before the outbreak of SARS, spent close to a decade chasing the origins of the 1918 flu. What she learned about public health policy, epidemiology and science ethics is enlightening, disturbing—and enormously relevant to the consideration of what we should do today to prepare for tomorrow.

THIS IS A significant work for Maclean's, as Paul Wells becomes full-time occupant of the magazine's back page. Paul, most recently an Ottawa-based political columnist for the *National Post*, has also written extensively for magazines. Politics remains part of Paul's best, but he'll range further afield, writing columns and longer pieces about a variety of topics. He takes over a space filled so long and so well by Allan Fotheringham and cartoonist Roy MacGregor—and, most recently, by rotating contributors. Paul's columns will be accompanied by illustrations by Terry "Asher" Mosher, who, when he's not at his day job at *The Gazette* in Montreal, serves as our cartoon editor. That gives one of the sharpest, most descriptive voices in Canadian journalism—as readers will soon discover. Let the fun and the occasional fever begin.



Wells to Wells, shifting into the back page

Anthony Wilson-Smith

antonw@maclean.ca or comment on The Editor's Letter

MACLEAN'S

Canada's national newspaper

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"What is more scary: the risk of contracting West Nile or the overuse of cancer-causing agents and asthma-related irritants in pesticides and DEET?" —**MANDY DENTON, North Vancouver**

Letter to the Editor: info@maclean.ca

West Nile season

Thanks for your coverage of the West Nile virus ("Winning for West Nile," Cover, May 19). The most interesting part was the reminder that about 40,000 people in Canada die from smoking each year. I tried to get a smoker friend who is panicking about West Nile to realize that the odds of her dying from her habit are at least a thousand times greater. But my argument wouldn't sink in. I even listed one smoker say that he is going to light up every time he went out doors to keep the mosquitoes away and that "his smoking was going to help him live longer." If the health authorities had their practices right they would be spending a thousand times as much on curbing tobacco use as on West Nile. But as for the media wanting to give massive coverage to trendy new diseases like SARS and West Nile, the politicians and the public will continue to have a badly distorted picture of what really matters. We could do your part by giving in a weekly update of smoking related deaths in addition to the reported cases and deaths from SARS and West Nile, just to keep things in perspective.

Gerard Gendron & Brenda, Stouffville, Ont.

I've lived through the West Nile scare and overreaction here in New York City. If you must scare people into buying your magazine, at least put the figures into perspective. How many people are dying from malaria, AIDS, from car accidents, from gunshot every day? I refuse to be scared by media reports of terrorism and disease. And I never believed Chicken Little, either.

Shawn Russell, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Your accompanying article on Lyme disease case, "As if SARS and West Nile weren't enough" (Cover, May 19), was informative but short on specifics. Here are some facts you might have included. Our Lyme disease research, which we conducted across Ontario in 2002, revealed 13 blacklegged ticks that tested positive for the Lyme disease bacteria. These ticks were retrieved



from dogs and cats that had no out-of-province insect. We also found wide distribution of mosquitoes blacklegged ticks on songbirds from northern Alberta to Nova Scotia, some of which were infected with the Lyme disease bacteria. Recently, we discovered *Borrelia burgdorferi*—the bacterium that infected the mouse—in blacklegged ticks and white-footed mice near Chatham, Ont., on the Lake Erie shore.

John O. Scott, President, Lyme Disease Association of Ontario, Niagara, Ont.

Suffer the children

It appears that world leaders have forgotten about the most helpless and innocent of us: the children ("A grim toll on the innocents," Children and War, May 12). When planning for war, does anybody think of the orphans? The orphaned children? The little ones who must carry physical and emotional scars for the rest of their lives? The young girls who are raped? What about those who will never live to tell their heartbreaking stories? To look into the eyes of someone so young and trusting, someone whose hands were smothered by rebels and must now lead a severely disadvantaged and saddened life, left me grief-stricken. After hearing stories such as these, I am left asking: how can chil-

dren ever hope for peace when adults are caught so much violence?

Margen McDonald, Hamilton

Racial vindication

I was delighted that Aaron Carter is celebrated as a Canadian hero following his winning goal at the world hockey championships ("Golden boy," The Week, May 26). Hopefully the skill of Carter's play and his contribution to Canada is a lesson for anyone who was involved in running the NHL in the 1940s and 1950s. Back then, Herb Carnegie was the star player in the Quebec Senior League and named its most valuable player three years in a row. However, Carnegie, who is black, never had a chance to display his talents in the NHL. Let alone in international hockey (as major arenas kept him from being signed by any team). While Aaron Carter is standing on the shoulders of past giants like Carnegie, these involved in running the NHL today can only look back in shame at the negligence of their predecessors.

Duff Campbell, Chatham, Ont.

Troop denial

But always heartwarming to see Canadian troops back at Canada Anderson and Colleen Olson ("Secret weapons," The Week, May 19) representing the American troops while Canadian women and women stationed in hot spots overseas get to watch home grown citizensmen have few ever seen or could identify.

Wendy O'Brien, Mississauga, Ont.

Playing hockey

What a great example of being and doing—offering us a look to get a day off work ("The magic of a 'sidekick,'" Over to You, May 12). If Alison McKinnon had a medium of imagination, that'd rather back into her bed and hide under the covers.

J. K. Landry, Corpus, B.C.

"So today I will stay in my pyjamas, read magazines...bake something incredibly delicious." I might follow in the shoes of someone. Why should I worry about who will open my offices and generate revenue to provide salaries, medical coverage, paid vacation and retirement benefits for an employee who brazenly admits that "figuring things can be good for you."

Phyllis Schwartz, Sacramento, Calif.

Intuitively loved your story. I thought tears to my eyes as I did the same thing with my mom growing up. As an adult, I love my personal health days. I believe you do need to take care of your emotional self every once in a while.

Kimberly Aroschick, Surrey, B.C.

Victorious memories

"What a connection," (VE Day, May 19) was of more than passing interest. When I passed the picture of Trafalgar Square filled to capacity on VE Day, I remembered that I was present on that occasion and to my astonishment and relief in the picture among the thousands of revelers in the square. As a 16-year-old boy from North London I wanted to be part of the action, and having heard that Winston Churchill would address the nation at 3 p.m., I walked to Trafalgar Square where loudspeakers had been installed to monitor his victory speech. Everything was fine until Churchill had finished speaking and then it seemed as though everyone wanted to leave at the same time. People began falling over my bike, hidden in the throng, and I think I was only saved from being the cause of an ugly scene because everyone was much a happy mood that day.

Bernie Clinton, Toronto

What an excellent photo of revelers celebrating VE Day on May 8, 1945. I might have rubbed shoulders with Edna Wilson, as I was also there in my Women's Auxiliary Air Force uniform. I, too, remember standing on the steps of the Victoria restaurant outside Buckingham Palace. We were eventually awarded by the balcony appearance of King George VI, Queen Elizabeth, the two princesses and Winston Churchill.

Gwyneth Shilling, Hamilton, Ont.

Our mistake

An editing error led to the blundering of the following two letters into one in the May 19 issue ("The worrying kind," The Mail). Here is how the letters should have appeared:

Suneel Khosla expresses well the desire of homosexual couples for marriage equality, equal status or of being an abnormal class of marriage ("Gay and ready to marry," Envy, May 19). Sadly, gay and lesbian couples can never be equal—it is physically impossible for them to produce a baby, the crowning point and joy of marriage. Chang-

ing the age-old meaning of "marriage" could lead to harmful effects for the state and its future populations. It has always been seen that the father-mother-child unit requires some kind of special recognition and protection to produce the best chance.

Gerrit Page, St. Catharines, Ont.

I want to congratulate Suneel Khosla for his bravery in standing out of the crowd and

being proud of who he is. It's not easy to be a professional wedding planner in the year 2003. It is also not easy for a man from his religious/cultural background to make the stand. I understand all these struggles as a very personal level. I also agree with Khosla that it is true that Canada recognizes the rights of all its people, as the Charter of Rights and Freedoms states.

James Lohar, Monrovia, B.C.



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Tell us about the local heroes in your community

The July 1 issue of *Maclean's* will feature our 17th annual Honour Roll. This feature profiles 10 Canadians who have made an important difference in our country. Previous honorees include such distinguished Canadians as Bob Brown, Dennis, Robert Goss, Robert LePage and Dana Knall.

We invite you, our readers, to submit nominations for the 2003 Honour Roll, including nominations of 50 words or less. To be eligible, candidates must be Canadian citizens who made a significant contribution to the life of the nation in the past 12 months.

Maclean's seeks people from a wide variety of fields, from the well-known to the quiet heroes. There is only one exception—those who are involved professionally in politics.



SEND YOUR SUBMISSIONS TO:
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MACLEAN'S | Canada, in depth.



MACLEAN'S BEHIND THE SCENES



BY PHILIP J. HARRIS FOR MACLEAN'S

CELEBRATING THE ORDINARY

Welcome to Jeff's world. Jeff Harris, a *Maclean's* assistant photo editor (above), is the creator of jeffharris.org, a Web site that documents his everyday life through an on-line photo album.

It features photos of everything from grocery shopping to a dentist's visit, depicting a life that seems pretty, well, ordinary. And that, says Harris, is exactly the point. "Like most people, I lead a fairly straightforward existence. The challenge is to remember that each day is important and make something worthwhile out of it."

To that end, Harris, who studied photography at Toronto's Ryerson University, has had his picture taken daily since Jan. 1, 1999. Most are self-portraits, although family and friends take a few. The photos are then posted on the site's calendar section, where visitors can click to any day at random.

To date, more than 1,600 photos have appeared, all of them featuring Harris in some way. Sometimes he fills the frame; on other occasions, only his hand or foot (or just his reflection) appears.

The site also contains a journal section, where visitors can write about what happened to them on a particular day. While most postings originate in Canada and the U.S., they also come from Israel, Iran, Malaysia, India, China and Russia.

The site was fairly quiet until 2002, when Harris was nominated in the personal category for a Webby Award, the Internet equivalent of an Oscar. Suddenly, jeffharris.org was getting 1,800 hits daily.

Harris didn't win that year and hits dropped to about 100 a day. Now, traffic is back up with the recent announcement of his second Webby nomination. "I'm thrilled about it," Harris says. "The nomination is great, considering the thousands of sites to choose from out there."

The Webby Award winners will be announced in June. In the meantime, you can check out Harris's site at www.jeffharris.org.

For further information about this article, contact: behindthescenes@maclean.ca. Visit www.macleans.ca for:

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Terror watch | Is al-Qaeda regrouping or just twitching in its grave?

The insurgency could not be more opposed. Only four weeks ago U.S. President George Bush stood triumphantly on the deck of an aircraft carrier and pronounced conflict in Iraq over and a "turning of the tide" in the larger war on terror. Now America and its allies are much more puny, huddled in the uncomfortable glow of what the U.S. calls an "orange alert," waiting for the next bomb to go off. Today's reality: new concrete barriers in front of the British Parliament; armies on battle gear patrolling the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco; and a missile battery taking up position near the war memorial in Washington. Its only purpose to shoot down hijacked airplanes.

The reason for all this is the recent spate of suicide bomb attacks—or, less so, in the past two weeks. Also a grisly 11-minute videotape by Osama bin Laden's No. 2, al-mughaibi Ayman al-Zawahiri, last week urging militant Muslims to follow the example

of Sept. 11. Should this become an al-Qaeda death rattle? Or, more disturbingly, that its hateful message has taken hold in the fertile slums of anger from Malaysia to Morocco? It almost doesn't matter. With the exception of Indonesia, where the government sent hundreds of paratroopers into the rebel province of Aceh to fight Muslim militants where they lived—the bin Laden approach—others could only wait and watch.

South Arabia, reeling by al-Qaeda attacks on its own soil, is now requiring all Saudis to carry identity cards. Canada arrested a Montreal man, originally from Morocco, who had apparently been in a watch list for years. And Norway seemed almost dumfounded that it was named specifically as an al-Zawahiri target. Like Canada, it hadn't backed the war on Iraq. But that is the nature of us against them terrorism. Enemies are broadly defined, and targets are chosen wherever their guard may be lowered.

Anti-aircraft missiles on a hill in Washington. Osama bin Laden's lieutenant lectures out on tape.



ScoreCard

V. Evil

Albert's mad rav discovery has put in line for Canadian barbecue season, but news for Turkey, where news for chicken. Anyone have a recipe for grilled rat?

A. Beefy again

Iran's Clinton's into Alberta's search in Ottawa restaurant to quell fears of anal cow disease—the recently checked death by cardiac arrest in SARS-ravaged Toronto. Canadian asking Japan did it first, whether it should policy feed back.

V. Vampire season

Buffy, under of death-kicker, ends seven years of staring off apocalypse. Series finale—full of mayhem, may and killer dialogue—includes something to a crater. Also enters a full-mouthed hole in a TV lineup new dinner for fresh blood.

A. Teenage brom-

Stomps these pencils, meeting adolescents' secret prayer after all. New research shows teens are having a growth spurt. Still unknown why this correlation best in commitment of city rocks, armed beds and sales crashed in the rain.

A. Boring

Purple dye has now got U.S. into vagaries, but king will of lead producers with endless minutes of Internet. After you, you love me song. Considered adding 7 are diaper changes in the box, but week in war time things too cruel to contemplate.

POLO
RALPH LAUREN BLUE

NEW FRAGRANCE. NEW CLASSIC.

Quote of the week | "Under the circumstances, it feels better than par to me." **Pro yellor**

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THEWEEK



DEATH ON A MASSIVE SCALE Rescue workers searched frantically for survivors of Algeria's worst earthquake in decades, a catastrophe measuring 6.7 on the Richter scale that claimed almost 1,200 lives, taking from France, Germany and Japan rushed to the northern African nation to help in rescue efforts. At the epicenter in Reghaia, 65 km east of the capital, Algiers, an apartment block collapsed (above), killing 358.

WORLD

IRAQ In a rare diplomatic win for the U.S., the UN Security Council voted to lift long-standing **sanctions** against Iraq. The changes mean Iraq oil can be sold on world markets and the U.S. and Britain will decide how to use the revenues to rebuild the country.

New targets by human rights and aid groups suggest between 5,000 and 70,000 Iraqis died during the recent war, the Christian Science Monitor reported.

MINI-WAR The U.S. Senate has approved new research and development of "low yield" nuclear weapons as well as anti-gen errating nuclear bunker busters. Congress is also studying the possibility of authorizing new research into small-scale nuclear, currently banned by U.S. law.

AFGHANISTAN In a showdown with region al warlords, Afghan leader Hamid Karzai threatened to assign union handbills of millions of dollars in border taxes were handed over to the central treasury. Eighteen

months after the Taliban was ousted, Afghan warlords remain bitter by ethnic inequality, weak central government and **warlordism**, according to the International Institute of Strategic Studies.

FLOODS More than 300 people died in Sri Lanka in some of the worst flooding in decades. An estimated 350,000 were left homeless.

CONGO Canada is considering pulling two military transport planes if the French land a new UN peacekeeping mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo. At least 250 people, including two UN observers, were killed in recent weeks amid renewed reports of **cannibalism** in the lengthy tribal conflict.

TOBACCO After four years of negotiations, the World Health Organization passed an anti-tobacco treaty sending out mandatory cigarette advertising restrictions similar to what is already in place in Canada. Ottawa said it would sign the treaty, the U.S. is studying it.

The next day, a Florida court overturned a US\$145 billion class action suit from July 2000 on behalf of sick smokers. Cigarette company stocks rose on the verdict.

ALCOHOL One of the harshest drinking countries in Europe, Ireland announced plans to require health warnings on beverages and to restrict the liquor ads that pervade every corner of Irish life.

BUSINESS

FIND "Bleeker guru" WorldCom, perpetrator of the world's biggest (US\$11 billion) accounting fraud, agreed to a record US\$380 million fine as part of a plan to emerge from bankruptcy. Dally, the firm was given a contract by the U.S. military to set up a new wireless network, something that it has never done before, in Iraq.

ENTERTAINMENT Liquor heir Edgar Bronfman Jr., who lost a big chunk of the family fortune in the entertainment business, wants to buy back Universal studios and



A FAIRLY MOUSIE Flashed by friends, neighbors and charitable insurers—hundreds of them—Haley's red-haired husband and sister-in-law said goodbye to her 31-year-old lifeless, whose disfigurement he says was first discovered May 13. Haley's parents were going door-to-door in Haley's neighborhood asking local firms to supply a drink stand for their testing in the hunt for a killer.

the glass music company he sold three years ago to the French sibling Vivendi.

PULLBACKS Facing a shareholder revolt, newspaper boss Conrad Black agreed to transfer control over his Hollinger chain and establish an independent review of executive compensation, including his own.

Quintel Chrysler abandoned plans to build a \$1.6-billion truck plant in Windsor, Ont., despite government assurances.

CANADA

BODYCHECKING The Canadian Hockey Association eased the permissible age for hitting in hockey to 11 and up, reversing a de-

BY NANCY ROEDWALT



PESTICIDES Following a heated debate that agitated even onto the sidewalks, Toronto became the largest North American city to ban the use of pesticides on lawns. Some pesticide use will be allowed on lawns with serious weed infestation. Everything else will be phased out over three years.

COGS The RCMP arrested six men, five from the Toronto area and one from Vancouver, for attempting to import 1,360 kg of cocaine, worth an estimated \$136 million, on a yacht travelling from Colombia. The bust was staged in international waters off Costa Rica.

EXORCISM A devout father, Diego Zepeda Cordoba, and a friend were sentenced to four years on the reduced charge of manslaughter for an exorcism that went horribly wrong. The 36-year-old Walter Zepeda died after seven days of being tied to a bed and mental abuse without food or water. In January 2002, in London, Ont. Church members prayed over Walter as he lay bound in his room.

POLITICS Party president Stephen LeDrew said top Liberals are putting pressure on Prime Minister Jean Charest to resign after he planned February 2004 departure date. Charest had been diagnosed with the disease. He later emerged the Prime Minister has asked some young Liberal members to resign early, presumably so he can sit out their political life.

Two of Ontario Minister John Manley's top leadership organizers, including strategy chief Tim Dwyer, quit last week in a flap about overly aggressive remarks directed by both the candidate and his chief of staff, runner Paul Martin.

In a campaign-style trial run, Ontario's Conservative government pledged to end a Toronto teacher lockout and introduce legislation to ban teacher strikes during the school year. It also promised to raise the welfare rates it slashed eight years ago in the so-called Common Sense Revolution, but only for families with children.

Joy Smith, a Tory candidate in the Manitoba provincial election, opened an election office in an abandoned Burger King on Pembina Highway, where motorists can order a drink from four menu items and sometimes even get the candidate herself at the drive-through window.

Mansbridge on the Record



WHAT'S A PM TO DO?

Poor Jean Charest: his bad-luck string now includes 'The Deck of Weasels'

I'M NOT SURE whether the Prime Minister knew what he was undertaking when it came to the deck game with the pack of playing cards. You know, the one where each card portrays the face of one of the PM's "innermost." The gambit must have been confident the media would fall for it—after all, they'd be almost everything else the military had spun in the weeks leading up to the war. The cards have achieved quite a shelf life, still constantly referred to by newspapers, newsmagazines and TV news anchors every time some act, sometimes obscure, former PM official gives up on it.

The cards also started quite the Internet buzz for when who might want to play. They were a hit seller for a while as conspiracy-bought over-the-counter cards such as the "Deck of Deceit," and many of the firms arranged for their ads to pop up while people were surfing the Net. But like low-cut jeans, even they had its time. People move on to other things, so sometimes specifics. So enter "The Deck of Weasels," the most recent Internet takeoff offering connected to the Iraq war, but the weasels in question aren't Saddam Hussein's henchmen—in fact, they're our own Iraqis. Rather, they're world leaders and celebrities who opposed George W. Bush's attack on Iraq. You have this odd collection (the ranges from Jacques Chirac to Barbara Streisand, from Karl Marx to Michael Moore).

And in this made-in-the-U.S. list, Canada hasn't been forgotten. Jean Charest gets almost top billing. There he is, holding the queen of spades (poor weasels Ireland Charest's see. Trick photography makes it look compromised by placing a Republican Guard breast on the PM's head. And the queen of spades is major stuff in the original pack, that honour went to Mohammed Marwan Zaidawi, one of the Iraq leader's main thugs. As for Charest, his queen of spades qualifications are like that. "I decided to join the United States, Britain

and Australia. I'll never Frenchify Canada, our Canadian French isn't." No mention of who those "friends" are.

Poor Jean Charest—the guy can't get a break. After proving—at least at the polls—to be the most successful Canadian politician of the last half century, you'd think he'd be allowed a graceful exit. But instead, it's been one hiccup after another. A nose bleed in his own last year (or his most popular manner was first) for which, if you believe the PMO story, played the PM to begin his 18 month election. A top aide called his more important strategic and economic ally a "weasel." The premier and the Opposition took turns blaming him for hospital waiting lists, the gun registry fiasco, and the fact the cad are gone. Then, just when things seemed to be slowing for the summer, his own party got into a years' giving interviews again and his hanging around too long. And now, someone is making a quick back-out offer with a cheap and quick trick. Can it get any worse?

All this must be a script that Charest's communications guru Jim Munson is using to change before his boss finally leaves the stage. Munson, a former reporter, has seen all the tricks over the years, and knows what works and what doesn't. So here's a cue for him to consider: that just worked south of the border the next time one of Canada's wannabe comes home, put the PM in a fight and let him out to sea for a landing offshoot. Think of the great images—the PM welcomed by cheering troops, shaking hands with those returning from Operation Apollo, and giving a speech that underlines what Canada has done in the war against al-Qaeda.

Of course, stepping off a Six King bell-copier may raise some awkward questions. Maybe no one will notice.

POOR MANSBRIDGE: A Chief Investigator of CBC television news and anchor of the National. To comment: jean@mansbridge.ca

Passages



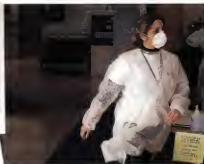
CHANGED Strands of hair from actor Scott Bakula (Perry of Star Trek), 33, was charged with second-degree child rape in Rochester County, Wash., for allegedly having sex with a 13-year-old girl in 1998. Bakula's captain Joe Thompson, 33, was charged with assisting a police officer during a bar brawl in his hometown, St. Thomas, Ont.

HONORED Longtime Macdonald back-page columnist Allen Fotheringham will receive an honorary doctorate of letters from the University of New Brunswick on May 29. Known to all as Dr. Fink, the 79-year-old Fotheringham wrote his column for Macdonald for 27 years.

RETIRED To many friends, the U.S. Army general who led the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, stepping down from his position as U.S. Central Command chief, Franklin S. D. Smith, plans to return to the military this summer.

THINKED British-born actor Ben Hadow, 41, became the first person to walk solo from Canada to the geographic North Pole, with one suitcase of food, equipment or fuel. Yoshino Miura, a 70-year-old Japanese high school headmaster and professional skier, is now the oldest person to climb Mount Everest, making the 2002 record set by a 65-year-old man also from Japan.

MISSED THE CUT After a five opening round, Swedish golfer Anders Sorenstam struggled in round two at the Bank of America Colonial last week and failed to qualify for weekend play. Instead by a sponsor, Sorenstam, 32, became the first woman to compete in a PGA Tour event in 58 years.



A NEW SARS BOMBSHELL

After a month of no new cases, it hits Toronto again

IT SEEMED THE nightmare was finally over. There'd been no new Canadian cases of SARS in a month. But the situation went from good to bad to worse in just two days last week. First, Toronto public health officials announced that they suspected five new cases of SARS in a north Toronto hospital. Then, on Friday, they indicated there was a second possible cluster at another hospital in the city's north end, bringing the number of suspected or probable cases to at least 20. They also said the recent deaths of a 36-year-old and another person over 80 may have resulted from the illness.

Dr. Donald Low, director of microbiology at Mount Sinai Hospital, reported that hundreds of people have been asked to go into quarantine because of possible transmission of the virus at St. John's Rehabilitation Hospital and at North York General Hospital, where the two patients died. "We're assessing the worst," he told a Friday evening news conference. "There has been transmission to family members and there's obviously been transmission to other patients

It's just so frustrating. It's depressing."

Experts are investigating whether the two clusters might be linked by an elderly woman who has since recovered. She had undergone an operation for a fractured pelvis at North York General—which had treated earlier cases of SARS—and developed pneumonia-like symptoms after being transferred to St. John's in early May. But doctors didn't suspect severe acute respiratory syndrome. Among the patients who'd been treated at St. John's who were still sick last week, a 39-year-old woman and a 57-year-old man were in critical condition. The critically ill man tested positive for the coronavirus linked with SARS. A third patient was reported to be in critical condition.

Meanwhile, researchers at the University of Hong Kong traced the SARS virus to the civet cat and two other small mammals in China. The scientists speculated that people could have been infected by eating,

The St. John's Rehabilitation Hospital is the site of one of two new disease clusters.

slaughtering or cooking animals. But the WHO's chief SARS virologist, Klaus Sobbe, cautioned that it was impossible to tell whether the animals had spread the virus to humans, or vice versa.

Hours before the SARS news began to break last week, Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman was praising health-care workers and city residents for their efforts in battling the disease that has struck more than 8,100 people worldwide, killing 685, including 24 in the Toronto region. The latest developments strike an overwhelming blow to Toronto's economy. Having lifted its travel alert to Toronto on May 14, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control re-issued it on Friday. It's not yet known whether the World Health Organization will re-issue its travel advisory against the city. Toronto hotel operators already estimate the outbreak has cost them \$125 million.

But the people in charge leave SARS isn't just going to go away. "This is the new normal," said Dr. Colin D'Cunha, Ontario's chief medical officer of health, of the disease's continuing presence. "We know we'd have to investigate certain new individuals." The latest cases kept the outbreak on the front pages. "With all that attention, you have to wonder who's going to listen to Toronto's \$5.5-million advertising campaign to lure travellers back to the city."

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WHERE'S THE BEEF?

A diseased cow deals a body blow to a \$7.6-billion-a-year Canadian industry

DANNY ROSEHILL remembers well the Tuesday morning in September when he watched the tarmac struts on New York City while the weekly sale at his cattle auction house in Olato, Ariz., continued apace. "The towers were brought down, 3,000 people killed, and yet the sale went on," says Rosehill. Fast forward to last Tuesday morning, when more than 1,000 cows were again up for grabs at the Olato Auction Mart. Shortly after bidding opened, word began to spread that a single cow in northern Alberta, already dead for nearly four months, had been identified as suffering from bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), better known as mad cow disease. Within minutes, the auction ground to a halt as nervous buyers withdrew their offers and disappointed potential buyers retrieved their cattle. In short order, Rosehill learned the United States had that its borders to Canadian beef, stock prices of multinational fast-food franchises had tumbled and the five cattle futures market had collapsed. "It's amazing," he says, "the repercussions from just one cow."

No arguing with that. By week's end, the search for clues into how a black Angus broiler cow became infected with the deadly brains-wasting disease had found 13 Alberta, Saskatchewan and B.C. farms into quarantine, with more expected to follow. All 150 head of cattle in the cow's last home, a farm in northwestern Alberta, were sent for slaughter so the animal's brain could be tested for BSE. The results, expected this week, may shed light on whether Canadian

officials were dealing with an isolated incident—or a potentially devastating outbreak. In the meantime, a long list of countries, including Australia, Japan and South Korea, followed the U.S. lead by banning Canadian beef and live cattle. That dealt a body blow to Canada's \$7.6-billion-a-year beef industry, as meat-packing plants slashed production

GRIT AND determination will come in handy. Fully unravelling the mystery could be days away and maybe weeks. God knows.

and growing backlog of export ready cows cooled their hooves as feedlots.

Why all the fuss? Still fresh in the public mind are disturbing images from the 1990s of British cows twitching and staggering from the neural damage caused by BSE (in case anyone had forgotten, TV newscasts obligingly re-aired the pictures last week). Then there are about 130 confirmed cases of humans suffering from a new variant of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease—a horrifying illness that results in dementia, severe nerve damage and almost certain death. The most likely cause of CJD: consumption of foods made from certain BSE-infected cow parts.

Thirteen farms were put into quarantine as officials searched for clues to the infection

Politicians and federal health officials were quick to insist that no such risk to humans existed in Canada as a result of last week's developments. The broiler cow, they noted, was effectively removed from the food chain on Jan. 31, after a provincial inspector at an Alberta abattoir noticed it looked underweight and deemed it to be suffering from pneumonia. The cow was de-clawed until her consumption and killed, its brain sent away for testing. Still, the routine examination for BSE did not take place until May 16—15 weeks later. Federal Agriculture Minister Lyle Vachell said the delay likely occurred because the diagnosis of pneumonia made the cow a low priority. However, some suggest the lag time was due, at least in part, to budget cuts and recent closures of provincial inspection labs. "Any system which takes over 30 months to test an obviously diseased animal has some serious failings," said Alberta New Democratic leader Raj Puri.

While the broiler cow had been removed from the food chain, officials could not say, with equal certainty, that the same was true for its offspring, some of which remained unaccounted for at week's end. Nor could they rule out the possibility that other animals had been infected with BSE, but even if some diseased cows had slipped through the cracks, experts noted cow disease, such as the University of Toronto's Neil Côté, and consumers had little to fear. BSE, he noted, is spread by abnormal proteins called prions, which concentrate in a cow's brain or spinal cord, parts of the



animal. Canadians are unlikely to eat. BSE last week marked the second year in a decade that mad cow disease had shown up in Canada. The first case, in 1993, involved a single cow in a herd near Red Deer, Alta. It turned out that animal had been shipped from Britain. The infected cow and its herd mates were destroyed and the disease contained.

How and where the broader cow became infected with BSE remained a mystery as of last week. In their search for answers, officials from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency pored over breeding records, bills of sale and other farm documents, many of them stored in a haphazard manner. "Sometimes you have to tie in the kitchen and open the shoebox," observed Claude Lavigne, the agency's associate executive director of animal products. By week's end, the exhaustive investigation had narrowed the cow's birthplace to two possible locations, one at Saskatchewan and the other in Alberta. The animal had passed through several farm operations before ending up last August on a spread near Whiteman, Alta.

Beef may be big business across Canada, but in Alberta it's an economic lifeline, second only in importance to the province's oil and gas industry. Of the \$7.6 billion generated in cattle farm cash receipts last year, \$5.9 billion came from Alberta. More than half of the \$2.2 billion worth of beef sold last week came from animals in the United States is Alberta herd.

All the same, there are lean times for Alberta beef producers. Two years of prolonged drought have devastated pasture land, sent feed prices skyrocketing and forced many ranchers to sell off their stock. But not everyone is willing to buckle under. Myron Pearman runs a cow-calf operation near Humberly, Alta., along with his brother, Curry in March, the Pearmans purchased 136 new cows, bringing their total herd to about 400. Then came the news of Alberta's mad breeder cow. "It was just such a shock," says Pearman. "You can adapt to weather and bugs, but this is a bludgeoner you have no control over."

Ranchers, though, are instinctive optimists. Pearman expressed confidence that Canada's food safety regulators would soon root out the source of the mad cow disease, leading to a lifting of the export ban. "I come home tonight and see we are hamburger," he said. "Tomorrow, I'm heading to town, maybe to

A CUT ABOVE: WHAT'S SAFE IN A MAD, MAD WORLD

THE DOGMA surrounding the discovery of cases of mad cow disease in Alberta is a struggle to keep the most controversial carnivore link to becoming a safe bet. But as authorities lean to restrict, Canada produces some of the safest food in the world. There's no need to panic, especially when you're armed with some useful information. A few facts:

■ Milk and all milk products are safe. So are collagen and gelatin prepared from hides and skins. Gelatin, a key ingredient in fruit and dessert gummies, is also used in pharmaceuticals and pet food, while collagen is used in plastic surgery, among other things.



buy some cows. I have no fear of that."

Such grit and determination will come in handy in the days ahead. Lavigne has cautioned that fully unravelling Alberta's mad cow mystery could be "many days away, and maybe weeks. God knows." Until that happens, the export ban will almost certainly stay in place, cutting the Canadian beef industry millions of dollars a day. Hardcore in the short run are freezer operators with fattened cows ready to be shipped out. If the borders remain closed for any length of time, those animals will have to be slaughtered and their meat sold at bargain prices—about for summer barbecues, if no one else.

There are also concerns that, even if the latest incidence of mad cow disease is fully traced and eradicated, doubts about the safety of Canadian beef could linger in the

■ A bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) infection has never been detected in domestic muscle tissue, from which the majority of quality meat, including steaks and roasts, is derived. ■ Humans are thought to develop new variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease by eating meat from animals infected with BSE. About 130 people—mostly in Britain—have died of variant CJD, the low-Canadian, a fatal neurodegenerative, and it first surfaced from CJD after eating reportedly contaminated beef in Britain.

■ The BSE infection in 98 per cent of cases has been found in the cow's brain or spinal cord. ■ Experts say bits of spinal cord could be found in mechanically comminuted meat. That meat is the relative risk of the carcass after the prime cuts have been removed. Experts believe BSE has been transmitted to humans through hamburger and other products that contain infected mechanically recovered meat.

■ Feeding protein from slaughtered mammals, including cattle, sheep and goats, to other mammals—believed to be the main way the disease is transmitted—has been banned in Canada since 1987. Still, some countries organic feed stocks have to be tested first.

■ BSE has an incubation period of four to five years, but cattle may not show any symptoms until later in life. Younger cattle are less likely to have contracted the disease. The infected Alberta cow was at least 36 years old, cattle intended for human consumption are typically slaughtered at two years or younger.

munds of consumers and exporting nations. "Yeah, that's always going to happen," says the Canada Red Export Pedemonte's Cam Daniels. "Maybe for the next six months or a year it will be talked about and be in the back of people's minds. But I think over time those perceptions will change."

A prolonged mad cow scare could also spark Alberta's \$5-billion tourist industry, perhaps doing for the mountain resort towns of Banff and Jasper what SARS has done to Toronto. "If it stays at just one mad cow, we should be fine," says Don Hayano, director of communications for Travel Alberta. "It depends on how this unfolds and how quickly the problem can be contained. That will certainly impact how the foreign media reports the situation here."

Not everyone in Alberta was forecasting the

latest emergence of mad cow disease. In Edmonton, members of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals made signs reading, "It's Mad to Eat Meat—Go Vegetarian," and distributed "emergency vegetarian starter kits" full of recipes and pictures of

legally abused animals. For PETA, it promised to be the greatest publicity coup since the same organization crushed high profile country singer Bob Long—the pride of Consort, Alta.—to declare that "meat stinks" in a series of noxious television

commercial in the early 1990s. In a province where tacking into a big juicy steak is still considered by many as something of a birthright, the rebel veggie seems unlikely to prevail. Then again, these are strange days on cattle country. ■



HOW MAD COW DEVASTATED BRITAIN'S BEEF INDUSTRY

IT STARTED one December day in 2004 when British farmer Peter Stent called his local veterinarian to examine a number of sick cows in his herd. They were losing weight, trembling and arching backs. One was scorching hot. The 194 Wile Veterinary Laboratory in Weybridge, Surrey, where it was diagnosed. A post-mortem showed that the cause of the illness may have been spongiform encephalopathy.

The illness, which came to be known as mad cow disease, had existed for centuries in sheep but had never been known to jump from one species to another. Without clear evidence that the illness could harm humans, the government was slow to react and downplayed the risks associated with mad cow. Even as the number of cases mounted, John Gower, the agriculture minister, claimed in a July 1999 publicity stunt that he was "most firmly sold" and fed his four-year-old daughter Caroline shepherd's meat on television. But the

disease was spreading. In 1997, scientists found 55 cases of mad cow; by 1998, 260,000 cattle had been destroyed, with 136,000 confirmed cases of BSE.

Increasingly worried, the government ordered the mass slaughter of all cattle over 30 months old, but because of the long BSE incubation period of up to five years, large numbers of apparently healthy but in fact sick animals had already been fed to the British population in the form of peas, soups, steaks and hot day meals. Then, on March 18, 1996, prime minister John Major was confronted with so much evidence linking mad cow to a human epidemic, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

The subsequent emergency ban that mad cow could be the cause of a fatal brain disorder in humans left all destroyed the country's beef

to finally control the outbreak in Britain, thousands of cattle were slaughtered

industry. At one point, 20,000 animals a week were being slaughtered, in total, nearly five million were destroyed. British beef exports also carried mad cow to mainland Europe, where 4,000 head of cattle have been found with the disease to date.

The human toll also mounted and some 138 people died after contracting Creutzfeldt-Jakob from beef. One of the victims, 17-year-old Stacy Robinson, noticed something was wrong when she crossed her mother's living room with her three-month-old son, Josh, in her arms and walked into a wall. She died 13 months later. In her father's village, Robinson lived in the English lakes community of Quiberon, which has been nicknamed the Village of the Damned. The latest death occurred two months ago. Andrew Giff was also from a village in the Shetlands. In 2006, Britain's official report into the mad cow tragedy strongly criticized former government ministers for "dogmatically sticking to a mission 'campaign of resistance.'" Another that seemed likely to happen again. —SARAHYER in London



'KILLING WAS JUST A GAME'

Hundreds of Iraqis are digging through mass graves in search of relatives

A PHANTOM haunts the thoughts of Salma Jasad. Nearly 23 years after she gave birth to her first son, Dawud, the only thing that brings her comfort is the ghost that creeps her dreams every night. "I know it's him," the 57-year-old mother of five says, a desperate gleam in her exhausted eyes. "He tells me not to worry. He tells me he's happy where he is. That's how I know he's dead. How could he be happy, still alive in the place?" She waves her hand at the crumbling remains of Abu Ghraib prison, Iraq's infamous house of death just south of Baghdad. In the smoldering table-and-bench hall at her feet, her husband Muhamed dug into the soil often with his bare hands—desperate, after five years of uncertainty over his son's fate, to find something, a remnant of cloth, a watch, anything to indicate this is where Dawud is buried.

A bombed-out guard tower stands above the grieving couple, still mourning despite missing him in plain sight. At this base, a building houses rows of cells. A few people wander aimlessly through its halls in a daze, only half-believing the reality of what went on here. But a sentence written on a cell wall reveals the terrible truth: "My god, save me. Jasim Maki, Basra, Aug. 1, 2002." Scratched into the stained and smirking plaster of a cell measuring two-by-three meters, the chilling plea echoes through an entire generation of Iraqis. Men and women who lived—and too often died—in fear, trapped in the nightmare that was life under the rule of Saddam Hussein. "Saddam is a monster," Salma says, holding back the

Saddam's presence still permeates Abu Ghraib prison, where thousands were executed

man that came and got in worse. "He deserves to be buried alive with these bodies. Killing was just a game to him."

Human rights groups estimate that as many as 250,000 people lost their lives under Saddam's brutal dictatorship, many of them after years of imprisonment and torture. Dawud was 21-year-old construction laborer working in Saddam City on the eastern fringe of Baghdad. He went to work one day and never came home. That was the last anyone ever heard of him. Perhaps he said something to the wrong person, or made an innocent comment that was overheard and misconstrued. "My son was no criminal, never talked about politics or religion," Salma says. "He hated Saddam but he was quiet about it."

It's likely that Dawud's body is buried in one of the mass graves now being unearthed

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by Shiite relatives near Baghdad. In all, 100, 80 km south of the city, 15,000 bodies have been found, according to human rights groups. More than 1,000 are in a graveyard near the village of Mahamad Salama, about 40 km north of Baghdad. Hundreds more are being excavated and around Abu Ghraib, where the most recent executions took place. At one point during the dying days of the regime, for the sake of efficiency, hundreds were buried at the very last step of the gallows.

The prison complex, covering at least a square kilometer, has a park-like feel. These gardens are in bloom, some of the murals, painted by prisoners on concrete walls and depicting mountains, rivers and fields, are untouched. It's a strange contrast to the dingy interior of the cell blocks—as if the incarcerated creators of the paintings were crafting something as far from their ugly reality as possible. The prisoners were crowded into windowless cells, sleeping on concrete floors, using holes in the ground as toilets. According to Dr. Maher Fakher Khudhair, a physician who worked at Abu Ghraib, Wednesday was execution day. The usual thoughts were hanging or a firing squad, though on occasion, Khudhair admits, he was forced to inject prisoners with poison and then had to sign documents attributing the death to natural causes.

One of the most visible incidents at Abu Ghraib occurred on March 16, 1998, when nearly 2,000 political prisoners were executed as part of a nationwide "prison cleansing." According to Khalid Saad al-Jarabi, a former captain in the Mukhabarat, the decade secret service, Saddam's son Qusay arrived at the prison with members of his special security force and ordered the mass killing. "Most of the victims were from southern Iraq, accused of joining banned political parties and taking part in anti-government activities," said al-Jarabi, who fled to Jordan in June 1999 and recently returned to Baghdad. "There was, of course, no foundation for such accusations, but securing people of such activity is standard procedure. Most seemed quite happy to see and didn't appear they'd been killed."

The killing began at 6 a.m. and continued until 9 p.m.—as the case of an execution nearly every 15 minutes. Some people were hanged, but most faced the firing squad. An execution normally requires two to three men, one to the chest and another to the



Belief that a relative has been found is followed by grief at a graveyard near Abu Ghraib

head. But to save both time and ammunition, Qusay delivered that one bullet to the head would have to do.

By a faded white building where foreign prisoners were held is a fresh grave containing at least 14 bodies. They were all found wearing civilian clothes, hands tied behind their backs and heads covered with the black executioner's hood. Their identities are still a mystery, though Salama is certain her son is not one of them.

With so much of the prison's paperwork burned or looted, there is a growing concern

that the searches, such as considering names are meaningless. Salama refuses to enter the prison, and stands with her back to the gate entrance as she looks over eyes fixed on her husband. Another man, a stranger, peeks up and down the road of plastic piping to see as a show, join to help in the digging. "We don't know if David is buried in there," Salama says, pacing around the pit. "If we don't find him here we'll dig up all of Iraq until we do."

The stranger with the flashlight should begin to scrape around a small mound in one corner of the pit. Mahamad says back a few steps in a gust of wind whips up sand, forcing the small group of anxious observers to cover their faces. The stranger also steps back, starting at the spot where, moments earlier, he'd been sweeping aside the dirt there, protruding from the earth is a human shoulder, covered with dirt and the waxy remains of decaying flesh. The stench makes it difficult to breathe. Salama, dazed, wanders off as her husband covers the grimy find with a sheet of corrugated metal. Confronted with the possibility that this could be David, the couple temporarily abandons their search. But, determined to give their son a proper burial, they will return later to examine the latest victim yielded up by the Abu Ghraib prison. If it is David, the pain of recovery may be balanced by the opportunity to put their son's spirit to rest. Until then, he will continue to haunt Salama's dreams.

"SADDAM HUSSEIN is a monster," says Salama, holding back the tears. "He deserves to be buried alive with these bodies."

any identification of these bodies may be impossible. Some international human rights organizations, led by Human Rights Watch, have raised warning flags about the chaos. "The U.S. government has not asked us any pertinent information about mass graves in Iraq," warns Peter Bouckaert, a senior researcher with Human Rights Watch. "The results in desperate families trying to dig up their loved ones—disturbing the evidence for forensic experts who could establish the identities of the victims."

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NATURE UNDERSIEGE

A pioneering survey calls for action to save our rapidly vanishing wilderness, writes DANYLO HAWALESHKA

"THIS IS MY medicine cabinet," says Karl Schibb, his ice-blue eyes widening with the excitement of someone about to let a neighbor in on what he already knows. The object of Schibb's focused attention is a red Coleman picnic cooler on a shelf in his barn near Wardsburg, Ont., 55 km southwest of Hamilton. It contains medicinal ministrations that keep his 40 contented cows healthy and topped up with milk. Schibb makes a small show of lifting the white plastic lid, like a treasure hunter opening a chest of gold. Inside are about 50 brown medicine bottles of precious plants and mineral extracts for the homeopathic care of his herd. If not for the 57-year-old Swabian doctor's conviction to organic farming six years ago, Schibb says he likely would have quit the dairy business long by now.

Schibb's cows were always getting sick. As one veterinarian after another failed to find

a solution, he came to think the problem might be bovine arthritis and the chemical fertilizers and pesticides on the crops he grew for his animals. "As soon as we stopped using those," says Schibb, "we could see the cows doing better." Today, when a cow gets the occasional udder infection, it's not antibiotic Schibb reaches for but a natural remedy, perhaps an extract from the poisonous belladonna plant. With his herd healthy, farming is fun again. "It's like I'm in heaven—close to it anyway. I don't want it any way we don't have any problems, but it's 10 per cent of what it was."

There are many reasons Schibb favours organic farming, and he was reminded of one last week, when mad cow disease struck Alberta. The illness, spread by feeding tainted, ground animal parts to cattle, brought home the potential health and economic consequences of straying from natural ways.

Organic farming, Schibb and many would argue, is one answer to easing some of the considerable pressure first modern human life exerts on our environment. But our battered planet has many wounds. World Wildlife Fund Canada notes this week in its first-ever Nature Audit, a 104-page document subtitled Setting Canada's Conservation Agenda for the 21st Century. The enlightening study, born from the world of accounting, values Canada's natural capital. It takes stock of our present-day environmental "equity," and compares what's left to the sustainable power-European standard, circa 1500-1600. The Nature Audit concludes that the way we've accounted for nature in the past—by simply ignoring its destruction—was ripe for budgeting biodiversity. A sort of environmental IPO.

Still, there's room for optimism—if we're prepared to take action. Several industries

and individuals are already finding sustainable solutions to our seemingly perpetual problems. Plans for the gas pipeline in the pristine Mackenzie Valley are taking the environment and Aboriginal peoples into account as never before in this country. Shipping companies in Atlantic Canada are doing their best to keep the right whale from extinction. To build on this momentum, we have to get away from the myth that Canada is a sprawling north-of-unspoiled landscapes. Not long ago, it was hard to imagine we'd ever face shortages of fish, wood, fertile soil, precious metals and freshwater. But rapacious, nearighted, industrial-scale agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries, forestry, mining and oil and gas development have changed that scenario. Dispute rampant

government geologists to turn things around, the natural environment is under siege all across inland and Canada.

Since the 1950s, Canada's paved roads have nearly quadrupled in length. Cities spewing their pollution spread voraciously into the surrounding countryside. Dams deprive vast habitats and alter water temperatures and nutrient levels. In the characterizing context, the Nature Audit examines how our human footprint threatens to squish biodiversity. Horrific stories abound (page 38). Honeybees, for instance, are in short supply because bees that Paraguay imported from Japan have made their way north, infected with a deadly virus. Fish are in particularly bad shape—the populations of swordfish, tuna and cod are one tenth of what they

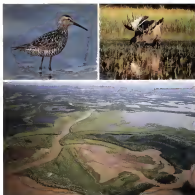
once were, says biologist out of Dalhousie University in Halifax.

The Nature Audit calls on us to:

- conserve the virtually untouched north
- better manage southern forests
- designate more Marine Protected Areas
- restore habitats to aid species recovery
- curb invasive species, which cause damage in the billions of dollars annually (page 15)
- adopt industry standards that favour environmental protection
- protect long-lived species that reproduce slowly—everything from narwhals to whales, turtles and yellow cypress trees
- reduce toxin use and get government approval for safer alternatives
- first urban sprawl and promote public transit

Canada has made significant international commitments. Follow-through is another matter. As WWF Canada president Monte

Close-up from left: old-growth Douglas fir on Vancouver Island; Canada goose; grizzly bear; Temple Falls in Alberta's Jasper National Park; Pacific sea otter; red fox near Churchill, Man.



Minerals plus it, "Pipelines, promises. I count no fewer than 28 promises to do a better job of conserving nature in this country, promises made by the government of Canada since 1970." Canada pledged to do the right environmental thing with the 1992 United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (we were the first undeveloped nation to sign the agreement at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro). The country reiterated that promise in 1995, by enacting the Canadian Biodiversity Strategy, which lays out a national blueprint for making good on our word.

Since then? Some modest progress, but more than 400 species remain at risk in Canada. So now the time for all of us to push for action, says Kevin Kavanaugh, director of biodiversity conservation at WWF-Canada. Government and industry are, as always, important, but the buying power of the consumer carries plenty of weight to drive change. Industry knows it. That's why lumber companies have sought certification by the Forest Stewardship Council, as

international body that requires sustainable and culturally sensitive wood-land management. "Know the products you're buying," says Kavanaugh. "People can really make a difference with their pocketbooks."

CANADIANS ARE the fortunate stewards of enormous environmental wealth: 20 per cent of the world's remaining undeveloped areas, 23 per cent of the wetlands, 20 per cent of the freshwater, and more than 90 per cent of the forests. And the WWF is not alone as a source of ideas for decreasing our negative impact on those resources. The David Suzuki Foundation is B.C., for example, takes a practical, proactive approach by encouraging Canadians to commit for a year to undertake three of 10 suggested ways to conserve nature. They are:

- Reduce home energy use by 10 per cent (heating accounts for nearly 60 per cent of energy consumption in the average Canadian home)
- Choose an energy-efficient house and appliances (R-2000 homes use 30 per cent

less energy than standard homes, and new refrigerators use 40 per cent less energy than models made a decade ago)

- Don't use dangerous pesticides
- Don't eat meat for a day each week (meat production uses far less water and land)
- Buy locally grown food to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants from food transportation
- Choose a fuel-efficient vehicle (a typical SUV burns almost twice as much fuel as a modern station wagon)
- Walk, bike, carpool or take transit
- Choose a home close to work or school to cut down on driving
- Support public transit systems
- Lessen noise and prevent pollutants to promote conservation

In the spring 2000 federal budget, then-finance minister Paul Martin asked an independent advisory body, the Ottawa-based National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, to devise indicators to track the impact that our century-old economic practices have on our natural and human assets. In a report released on May 12, the organization called on Ottawa to make profound changes to the way it keeps the books. To account for the true state of the economy, the report says, federal budget needed six additional indicators—air pollution, water quality, wetland acres, forest cover, greenhouse gases, public education—to add meaning to popular yet insufficient indicators like gross domestic product.

Always a crude economic measure, GDP just doesn't cut it up to our own anymore, says David McGinty, chief executive of the Round Table. Consider an ecosystem that causes a run on generators, causes pine-bedingled collapsed trees, and drives hydro crews from across North America to repair fallen power lines. "The economists," McGinty scoffs, "come in and count and say, 'Waive a figure to the GDP.'" There's no mention of a few million downed trees, the lost capacity to store atmospheric carbon, the destruction of special habitat and riverbank erosion. "Well-known macroeconomic indicators such as the GDP tell only part of the story," warns McGinty. "We're going to have to evolve our thinking so we can report on the true health and wealth of the country."

IN A PERFECT WORLD, we wouldn't need pesticides. But at least initiatives are underway for curbing their use. The Norfolk



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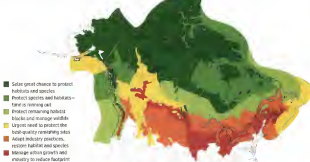


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MACLEAN'S

MAKE ROOM FOR NATURE

The World Wildlife Fund maps Canada from its relatively pristine habitats to the critical swath in red where major efforts are needed to restore species and habitat and reduce the human footprint.



SOURCE: WORLD WILDLIFE FUND. COURTESY OF NATURAL ALBERT

Tree Growers' Association, representing orchards around Seneca, Ont., a short drive from Schib's organic farm, produces 15 per cent of the province's apples. For several years, its 22 members have employed an integrated pest management program. When confronted to conventional practices, IFM typically uses pesticides used by roughly 25 per cent, says John Langer, director of international conservation projects for WWF-Canada. The farmers also select pest-specific pesticides instead of asking every bug in the place. Then comes the beneficial ladybugs that, helpfully, attack fruit-eating sap-sucking aphids. "When spray with a broad-spectrum pesticide," says Langer, "you're killing your friends as well as your enemies."

It could be that when May rolled around you'd spray pesticide X, and in June it was pesticide Y. So-called calendar spraying, has generally been abandoned as too expensive and environmentally suspect, says Jackie Busch, the growers' association quality assurance manager. Now, the association hires university students to scout orchards for pests, providing growers with weekly reports. Below a certain pest threshold, the rest

of spraying outweighs the benefits. "Sometimes that means you have to wait until some damage to the apple tree," says Busch, "but it saves the grower money and lessens the impact on the environment."

New IFM techniques may further optimize use. In one approach, farmers fast-track plastic twin-tunnels saturated with synthetic pheromones to their trees. Mimicking a sexually active female insect, the sheets confuse males and reduce their likelihood of finding a mate. While apple buyers in Britain—whose up to one-third of the Norfolk association's apple production is exported—also support IFM, and make it a condition of sale. It's an economic boon as well, according to Gary Ireland, who started farming near Seneca with his father in 1967. "If I wasn't in IFM today, I wouldn't be in business," he says. "Just cannot afford to go out and spray if it isn't warranted."

No company can afford to spend itself into the ground these days. That's not true here, says Ireland, who notes that as insecticide sprays, exemptions come to a halt there's a market for greater products. In April, Montreal-based Tembec Inc. was awarded a Forest Stewardship Council certificate for its management of the 38,000-sq.-km

Condon-Cosens Forest in northeastern Ontario. Certification requires Tembec to submit to independent audits to ensure that it harvests trees in a manner similar to forest fire damage—that speeds forest regeneration. It has to include local residents and environmental groups into decision-making. It must adjust its operating procedures to protect rare tree species. Finally, Tembec has to consult with Aboriginal communities affected by its harvest.

Rick Groves, Tembec's chief forester for Ontario, sees great long-term benefits. "There should be a perceptible harvest of that forest," he says. And remember like them, Home Depot and Home are all hungry to buy FSC-certified products. They're stamped with the FSC logo to help consumers make an environmentally and socially sound choice. "We're hoping we'll get a little bit more for the lumber," says Groves. "We're also hoping that if we don't, that at least we get opportunities to access markets where we wouldn't get right now—that alone would be nice."

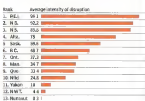
Sound ecological practices are by no means confined to giant logging companies like Tembec, says Curt Brewer, a founder of the

MAKING A BIG IMPRESSION

In its Nature Aesthetics World Wildlife Fund Canada tracks the dramatic "footprint" that we're left on our environment, and our failure to live up to commitments to protect our natural world. Our footprint can be as benign as the displacement of local species by even well-managed farming, or as destructive as strip mining or clear-cut logging.

THE SCALE OF DISRUPTION

WWF has calculated to what extent the landscape has been altered from its pre-settlement state. This score, on a scale of 100, measures not the size of the footprint but the average intensity, ranging from negligible to critical, in eight categories: agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries, forestry, large dams, mining, oil/gas, and transportation/urban development. The disruption impact is on average highest in the smaller, heavily settled Maritime provinces.



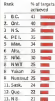
THE BIGGEST FOOTPRINTS

While the smaller provinces have the heaviest footprints, the six largest provinces, from B.C. to Quebec, amounting to 54 per cent of Canada's land and water surface, account for almost 80 per cent of the total disruption footprint across the country.



BROKEN PROMISES

Three years after their own deadline, no province or territory has met even half of its 1992 commitments to set aside tracts of land protected from industrial incursion by 2000.



Canadian Eco-Lumber Co-op in Richmond, B.C. His organization helps smaller FSC-certified woodlot owners connect with retailers. Eco-Lumber members produce bass, decking and siding, flooring, shelves and furniture from forests that remain ecologically intact after logging, says Brewer. "By supporting non-forestry, and making it so desirable for designers, architects and customers," he adds, "hopefully everyone will get excited and it'll start to work."

And soon too soon, judging by critics of Canada's overall ecological record. "The federal government has adhered to the Victorian frontier development paradigm, which is let's go in, dig it up, make lots of money, and deal with any problems later."

That's Peter Brown, director of Arctic conservation at WWF-Canada, talking about practices pre-dating the planning for a \$4-billion, 1,340-km Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline through the Northwest Territories.

The pipeline, which could be operational as early as 2008, threatened to disrupt one of the world's last untouched wilderness if conservation efforts were ignored. The Mackenzie River flows 1,700 km southwest from Great Slave Lake to the Beaufort Sea.

Its sprawling habitat is home to caribou, grizzly bears, wolves, wolverines, moose and large populations of migratory ducks, geese, swans, shorebirds, loons and birds of prey. In April, Ottawa and the Del. Cho. First Nations agreed to protect 70,000 sq. km of pristine forest and wetlands from development for the year, preserving a network of key wildlife habitats and areas of cultural and spiritual significance. "On the ground, that has never happened for a major frontier development in Canada," says Evans. "It wouldn't have happened without the co-operation of the federal government and the will of the Del. Cho."

A half decade isn't a long time. But Del. Cho Grand Chief Michael Nadli welcomes the deal in a good star for his people, who have lived in the Mackenzie Valley for three tens of years. "What it does is it gives us an opportunity to work with non-governmental organizations and government to try to ensure that within five years there is some level of plan to perhaps extend the amount of that area."

Whether you look, the bay is planning. Take the fire of a declining population of fewer than 500 right whales, for example

The massive mammals were hunted nearly to extinction before the international community protected them in the 1930s. They've barely bounced back. Lining and breeding in the coastal waters between Newfoundland and Florida, the whales have been hunted by ships. "The loss of one individual at any time is critical, especially no reproductive age females," says Cathy McManis, a WWF conservation biologist in Halifax. "Reducing risks is the most important thing we can do."

Again, money played a role. John Logan, who oversees the right whale life for Irving Oil Ltd., says the company had a responsibility to see that its ships weren't killing whales. "When something like this is happening in your neighbourhood," says Logan, "I think it's important to be part of the solution." Irving, now with WWF-Canada, is working with the United Nations International Maritime Organization to move and narrow the shipping lanes in the Bay of Fundy to skirt territory frequented by the whales. "It's almost scary," says McManis, "but it's important that with the right amount of partnership you can make really important things happen." It's a good start. ■



Scientists blame pesticides for the growing numbers of frogs with serious deformities

'SENTINEL' SPECIES

They are freaks of the natural world—frogs with four hind legs, limbs coming out of their heads, or webbed legs all. Over the past two decades, these abnormal amphibians have

been spotted across North America, including New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario and the Yukon. (Because frogs' skin absorbs pretty much whatever is in the water or air, scientists see them as a "sentinel" species.) "This is an ominous warning that something in the envi-

ronment is horribly wrong," says Doug Haffner, a University of Windsor biologist. One prime suspect: pesticides, which can weaken the immune systems of some animals or act directly on the growth process. "Frogs' immune systems," says Haffner, "are so sensitive that where other animals might appear to be dealing with pesticides, frogs court." He and others say these poisons can leave frogs unable to fight off a squamous papilloma, the premalignant. They attach themselves to a tadpole, tangle under its skin, form cysts, usually where the hind legs are developing, and disrupt growth. As shocking as the deformities are, frogs have a bigger problem—a threat to their survival. With amphibians and reptiles facing enormous pressures from many man-made sources, it will take determined efforts to reverse habitat and lower pollution levels to give them a fighting chance. Of the 11 species that formerly thrived in Ontario's Point Pelee National Park, for instance, six—including the blue-spotted frog—have disappeared since DDT spraying for mosquitoes in the 1950s. The five remaining species have DDT byproducts in their bodies. It will be hundreds of years before that banned pesticide disappears from the environment.

—SARAH MCCLELLAND

PUSHING NATURE'S LIMITS

In so many ways, we keep putting unnatural pressures on the environment

HIGH-RISK ENTERPRISE

ONE LAKEER working 10 increasingly frustrating years as a biologist with the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, concerned with the habitat destruction of B.C.'s salmon. He quit 18 months ago. The department, he says, is locked in an "unresolvable" conflict between its mandate to protect wild fish stocks and its role in "falsely certifying" B.C.'s (salmon) as, \$381 million a year salmon-farm industry. Langer signed in as director of marine conservation with the Vancouver-based David Suzuki Foundation, one of many environmental groups claiming that aquaculture threatens the marine environment. "Fish farms appear to be breeding reservoirs for sea lice and diseases," says Langer. The WWF Canada's Nature Audit draws similar conclusions, also warning that the net cages floating in the sea disperse untreated waste and antibiotics,

allow the escape of fish that are not native to the habitat, and cause the deaths of the small wild fish that the farms use as feed.

An increase in disease over farmed versus wild identified last September when the B.C. government lifted a seven-year moratorium on fish-farm expansion. The industry argues it has learned from past mistakes. It has reduced the number of escapes, the release of polluting food waste and the level of antibiotic use. B.C. Fisheries Minister John van Dongen cautions, calling the industry "safe and environmentally responsible." Its controlled expansion, he says, "could generate more than \$1 billion economic activity over the next 10 years."

The WWF accuses aquaculture's heaviest impacts in the east coast's Bay of Fundy and the Broughton Archipelago off northern Vancouver Island—areas that produced almost 40 per cent of Canada's farmed salmon in 2005. The waters of the archipelago have a disturbingly

low rate of wild pink salmon last year. Environmentalists say imported fish were fatally infected by sea lice from fish farms, the farmers say many factors cause salmon runs to fluctuate. The WWF wants more research and a national aquaculture act. Langer says the federal government already has tough fishing laws—what it lacks is the will to enforce them. —KIM MACLELLAND



Young B.C. salmon show the ravages of the sea lice that can thrive in fish farms



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ALL FISHED OUT

Commercially valuable fish species are in decline throughout Canadian Atlantic and Pacific regions. And in those stocks dwindling, notes WWF Canada's Nature Alert, commercial harvest in the Arctic fishery will likely grow. Let's hope we've learned some lessons about preservation from the shameful tale of the cod which, according to legend, were so thick off Newfoundland when Anna Cabot encountered them in 1492 that they slowed the ship. Fast-forward five centuries to federal Fisheries Minister Robert Thibault's April announcement that the stocks of northern cod are so depleted that all fishing must stop off Labrador, the northeastern part of the province and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

How did it come to this? A March report by the Fisheries Resource Conservation Council, which spearheaded Ottawa's actions, said the trouble started in the 1940s, when technological change allowed huge trawlers to plunder the cod's offshore spawning grounds. While the cod managed to survive in huge numbers through centuries of fishing, that scenario suddenly changed. Landings that had been totally bare in the range of 150,000 to 200,000

fishes soared to 800,000 tonnes a year. Somewhere in the late '60s, fishermen noticed their nets were empty. In 1992, Ottawa declared a fishing moratorium that threw 40,000 Atlantic Canadians out of work as a bid to bring the cod back.

By the late-1990s it looked like stocks were beginning to rebound, prompting the federal government to reinstate the fishery on a limited basis. But the comeback never happened—even with most of the nets out of the water. FROCC's scientists cite a range of factors including continued fishing, more seals, low levels of spawning stock and high mortality rates for cod. The upshot: with breeding age cod fished almost out of existence, even shutting the fishery altogether may not be enough. A fish once so plentiful it could be scooped out of the sea in baskets may never recover. "We are at a great crossroads now," FROCC chairman Fred Woodman wrote in an open letter to Thibault, "and we will all need courage and conviction to make the changes necessary to rebuild our stocks and our fisheries." It's not already too late.

JOHN BUCHART

A parasitic nose from Japan, by way of Paraguay, is killing Canada's honeybees

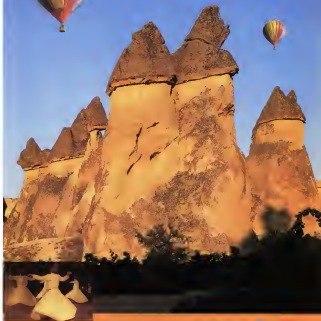
HONEYBEES IN PERIL

The honeybee arrived in North America with European settlers in the 1600s, and a bees' life is not only a honey-making a \$180-million-per-year enterprise in Canada, the very creature's pollen-shed efforts contribute to an estimated \$1 billion worth of crops. But there may not be enough bees to go around this year. The problem dates back to the early 1970s when honeybees that Paraguay imported from Japan were found to be carrying lethal parasitic mites. The pests quickly spread to bee populations in the U.S. and Canada, where they proved capable of killing off an entire colony of European honeybees in a year. Canada banned the importation of bees from the continental U.S. In 1981, but the parasite, which has become pesticide resistant, keeps spreading. "The entire beekeeping community is in a conundrum trying to figure out how to deal with these mites," says Mark Winston, a Simon Fraser University biologist and bee expert. With a little whiffery of the plague, severe winters and drought, putting scarce beekeepers across the country out of business, he adds, "there will most likely be a shortage of honeybees for pollination." 5 M

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Climate change is allowing Churchill's polar bears less ice time to build up on seals.

WARMER AND HUNGRIER

In 2007, Edmonton scientist Ian Stirling noticed an odd phenomenon: the polar bears he had been observing for the past 10 years south of Churchill, Man., were losing weight. Stirling, who works with Canada's Wildlife Service, suspected natural causes, possibly a temporary decrease in the bears' food supply, largely ringed seals. But the weight loss continued. Today, Churchill's 1,200 polar bears are 25 percent lighter than they were 30 years ago. Studies Stirling and his colleagues have conducted over the past two decades now point to global warming as the culprit.

Polar bears eat most of their food in the spring, when they make the ice search of seals surfacing through holes for air. But with temperatures in Hudson Bay rising, the ice breaks up about two weeks earlier than it used to, leaving the bears less time to hunt. One side effect of their diminishing weight is that they're having fewer cubs—mostly twins rather than triplets. Researchers expect they'll see similar effects elsewhere. "These letters are an indicator," says Stirling, "of the type of thing that will happen to polar bears in other places as the climate continues to warm." **—J.M.**

KILLED FOR FOLLOWING THEIR INSTINCTS

Winifred Sinclair looked forward to an idyllic life when she moved in 1980 to a farm on Judith son Lake, straddling the Canada/U.S. border in Alberta, B.C., but it hasn't turned out that way. Each year, many of the trumpeter swans that spend the winter on the lake die from lead poisoning after ingesting shotgun pellets from the bottom of the lake, left from decades of duck hunting. "My husband and I sometimes kill the dying swans to end their misery," says Sinclair. "This is not what I want my four- and six-year-old boys to see."

Heavily hunted at the turn of the past century for its thick down, the trumpeter swan was designated a protected species in 1916. Conservation efforts have bolstered the population to about 45,000 from an all-time low of 77 in 1933. But the birds are attracted to the lethal pellets that they mistake for sand stones or grit, which waterfowl eat to aid their digestion. With thousands of birds fatally poisoned in Canada each year, the federal government restricted the use of lead shot in 1989. But the threat remains. In the millions of pellets lying lake bottoms across the country.

S.M.



Trumpeter swans, not taking shotgun pellets for grit they need, are dying of lead poisoning.

VANISHING PLAINS

They're the breadbasket of North America, beautiful to behold as the winds rustle grain fields stretching to the horizon. But from southern Alberta and Saskatchewan to Wyoming and Nebraska, the vast Northern Great Plains are one of the earth's most threatened and least protected areas. Almost everywhere, they have been ploughed into crop land. With their habitat gone, indigenous creatures and plants have struggled for survival—more than half the animals on Canada's endangered list, including the burrowing owl, prairie swift and ferruginous hawk, come from this region.

The scale of the grassland destruction across Canada hit home for WWF biologist Lindsay Rodgers in the mid-1990s when she began restoring farm and parkland in Ontario to its original grassy state. "To see the beautiful wildflowers and the tall grasses is amazing," says Rodgers. "Then remember this world is almost gone." On the Prairies, generations of farmers made great efforts to preserve their environment. But with all the gas development, urban sprawl and other pressures, "protection for species isn't there," Rodgers adds. "That region is losing its biodiversity." **—J.M.**



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UNWELCOME IMMIGRANTS

They're called invasive exotic species, and they're doing a lot of damage

READY OR NOT, here they come. In its newly published *Nature Atlas*, World Wildlife Fund Canada sounds the alarm about eight particularly threatening species—from fungus to fish—poised to infiltrate the Canadian environment. When the scientific community calls invasive exotic species are already well established among us—at least 1,500, and likely many more, plants, animals and other organisms that weren't here before the Europeans landed. Some were brought in intentionally, for decoration, food or other purposes. Others were unexpected guests, including hitchhikers in ballast water and pecking marauder or song sparrow birds. Once they gain a foothold, they've proven extremely hard to dislodge, as Lake Erie's tragic experience with two emerald shrimps (page 36) has demonstrated.

Emerald ash borer: Great efforts are being made to confine this Asian beetle to the Windsor/Detroit area where it has been killing the ash, a tree that's abundant from Manitoba to the Atlantic provinces. It's likely arrived in the wood used in packaging crates for sea-going freighters.

Asian longhorned beetle: Another Asian inhabitant of shipping containers, it goes after maples as well as other forest and ornamental trees. Found in several acres, it has been intercepted in Vancouver and southern Ontario.

Twisted oak death: This fungus that kills oaks, maples, Douglas fir and other trees turned up in California in 1995 and has made its way as far north as Oregon.

Asian tiger mosquito: A southern Asian insect capable of transmitting yellow fever, dengue fever, encephalitis and possibly the West Nile virus, it has been spotted in Ontario and southern Ontario.

Water hyacinth (hyacinth): Especially thorny in the Great Lakes and St. C., this Asian water plant grows in thick mats that clog waterways and seriously disrupt swimming, boating and fishing.

Whirling disease: This European parasite, in 22 states and spread within 100 km of Alberta, attacks trout and salmon.

Highland crops: An electric shock barrier may not stop the large Chinese carp, now thriving and displacing native species in the Mississippi system, from reaching Lake Michigan through a canal at Chicago.

Asian shore crab: A highly reproductive native of the western Pacific, it is crowding out native crab species on the U.S. east coast and heading toward Atlantic Canada.

Chicago and New York have seen serious indications of the Asian longhorned beetle.



AN ERIE DECLINE

Thanks to invasive species, the shallowest Great Lake is in big trouble—again

LAKE ERIE is in dire trouble, again. And that's bad news for the entire Great Lakes system. Declared dead in the 1970s, Erie was healthier by the late 1980s than it had been in decades, thanks to a landmark international clean-up effort. But since the mid '90s, scientists have documented a seasonal reappearance of an enormous, oxygen-depleted dead zone—evidence of a fundamental imbalance of the ecosystem—while massive mats of smelly algae float along shorelines. Lay fall brought another disaster, with the corpses of thousands of loons, mergansers, other ducks and gulls washing up on Lake Erie's shores. All the while, key fish populations are falling in line, the world's most valuable freshwater fishery.

This time chemical pollutants aren't the culprit. It's a much more challenging problem of "biological pollution." Since the St. Lawrence Seaway opened in 1959, 94 foreign

species have established themselves in Great Lakes waters, 36 of them—including the infamous zebra mussel and a tiny fish called the round goby—having arrived in the ballast water of transoceanic ships. These invasive species are dramatically altering the ecology in the world's largest supply of surface fresh water and putting enormous stress on the lakes, says Gail Rosenburg, a biologist and Director of the International Joint Commission's Great Lakes Regional Office. "The impacts are in the billions of dollars annually," she says, from clogged water intake pipes to declines in fish populations and disruptions in natural ecosystems. Coping with zebra mussel alone costs an estimated \$500 million per year.

The five lakes in question aren't any great.

Dead loons, along with other waterfowl, washed ashore in the thousands last fall.

They hold 20 per cent of the world's fresh water—enough to cover all of Canada to a depth of 2.7 m. Children of the last ice age 12,000 years ago, they're part of an enormous drainage basin 520,000 sq. km in size, home to 34 million people, 6.4 million of them in Canada. Until relatively recently, they were safe from aquatic invaders. Few species could negotiate the series of rapids on the St. Lawrence River, including Montreal's Lachine and the Long Sault near Cornwall, Ont. Niagara Falls isolated Lake Ontario from the upper lakes. Erie, Huron and Michigan were essentially one body of water separated from the bay by a thin sill. Superior, by contrast, was a series of rapids on the St. Mary's River.

But the rapids impeded any only marine life but surface traffic as well. As late as 1980, an ex-copier Montreal businessman, François Dohier de Cenou, launched a project to build a 1.5-m-deep canal to bypass the



Lachine Rapids. A formidable task, it was not to be completed until 2014. Four years later, the Erie Canal connected Lakes Ontario and Erie to the Atlantic. Many more canals followed, including the Welland that bypasses Niagara Falls to link Ontario to Erie, and others on both sides of the St. Mary's.

A primitive, unattractive fish from the Atlantic was probably the first species to colonize the newly accessible lakes. The walleye reached Lake Ontario in the 1830s, later gaining access to Lake Erie and the upper lakes. By the late 1940s, this mixture of the seas had decimated lake trout and other cold-water fish species. Canadians weren't worried about invaders from the sea when they cheered the opening of the Seaway in 1959. But in welcoming the world's ocean-going traffic, the Seaway also opened the way to foreign invaders, forever changing the ecology of the Great Lakes basin.

The finger-mill-head zebra mussel, as time to the Canadian Sea region, was the white up call. At first, in 1988, it seemed just an expensive nuisance—clogging water intake pipes and forcing swimmers to wear shoes as protection against the carpet of knife-edged shells. But the invasive mussel species

started disappearing—1.5 in Erie, Lake St. Clair (between Huron and Erie), 10 more in western Lake Erie. As the shallowest and warmest of the Great Lakes, Erie is usually the first to show signs of stress. Zebra mussels, having large areas of lake bottoms with up to 400,000 per square meter have changed the ecology of the lakes. As filter feeders, zebras suck in water and ingest its phytoplankton—microscopic plants that are the basic food source for small fish and invertebrates such as daphnia, an important shrimp-like species.

Paradoxically, Lake Erie is now cleaner than it's been in living memory, thanks to the enormous sequester of phytoplankton being removed by the zebras. But daphnia, which normally account for up to 70 per cent of the living biomass of any lake bottom, have disappeared from large areas. And as the ecological dominoes fall, the absence of daphnia, a vital food source for smaller fish like alewife, bloater, rock bass and shiner, means less food for the bigger and commercially important fish—trout, perch,

and bass. Worst impacts of zebra mussels are helping close huge dead zones and poisoning birds,

wildlife and salmon. Not surprisingly, perch and walleye populations are declining.

Meanwhile, as the zebras vacuum up all that phytoplankton, they eject enormous volumes of waste that is high in algae-promoting phosphorus. One result: recent algal blooms causing taste and odour problems for municipal water supplies. Another may be dead zones. Scientists speculate that the combination of zebra, manual waste and clearer water allows algae to grow at greater depths, where there is less oxygen. When they die, what little oxygen is there is used up, causing a dead zone.

Then there were those corpses of those birds of loons and other water birds. "No one could have predicted that when man's world and old killing warms up," says Hugh MacLachlan, aquatic ecologist at the University of Windsor and an expert on invasive species in the Great Lakes. As the zebra filter massive amounts of water, they also ingest and absorb toxins and contaminants. Diving ducks such as the greater and lesser scaup drive in zebras, and their populations boomed—for a while. For the past few years, scaup have been dying in large numbers as a result of eggs-to-brood, a



roads produced by a subterranean that concentrates inside the sediments.

Now Great Lakes bass and fish species are no longer directly, but another Eurasian invader, the round goby, gobble them up. "The tiny fish was first spotted in the St. Clair River between Huron and Erie in 1990. It soon spread throughout the lakes, becoming the most common fish in parts of Lake Erie. But gobies gorge on sediments, they further concern marl the concentrations and bacteria that the muskies have filtered from the water. Loons, mergansers, gulls and other fish-eating birds that feed exclusively on the gobies become poisoned and die. The rail, growing steadily over the past four years, has become horrendous. "We found more than a thousand dead loons on the benches of Lake Erie's Long Point shore last October," says Steve Timmermans, Aquatic Surveys Scientist at Bird Studies Canada.

As new species continue to enter the lakes we see unexpected effects of these "world, synergistic combinations" that have unpredictable impacts, says Anthony Ricciardi, an aquatic

ecologist at the Biodiversity Museum in Montreal. Of the thousands, both aquatic and land-based, that have arrived over the years, 170 have established themselves in and around the Great Lakes, killed or sickened, with new invaders being discovered on average every eight months, and many more on their way. "They're on the move in Europe," he says, "and will arrive here sooner or later."

One already here is a tiny, centimetre-long water bug called the fishhook water flea, another ballast-water invader that MacIsaac first encountered in Lake Ontario in 1998. Within a year it spread through Erie and Huron to distant Lake Michigan. The fishhook water flea eats zooplankton, the basic food for most larval fish, making it yet another threat to the Great Lakes' multi-billion-dollar sports and commercial fishing industry. "The ecology of the lakes is unrecognizable now," says MacIsaac. "We don't know what's going on."

On a more positive note, no new fish or muskies have spread from ballast water since 1993. U.S. regulations requiring all ships to

exchange their ballast water in the ocean or seal their tanks before entering the St. Lawrence can take much of the credit. "Canada's regulations are still voluntary," says Dave Bland, a scientist at the Great Lakes Environmental Research Lab in Ann Arbor, Mich., "with no unapologetic" early this year, the U.S. Congress passed legislation that adds more clout to American control efforts. All states on the lakes must develop plans for dealing with foreign species, and all ships put into service after 2005 must have on-board treatment systems for ballast water. It would also make US\$180 million available each year to fight the pests and address the need for public education, early detection and rapid response measures.

And Canada? Not only is there no comparable legislation in the works, the federal government is doing nothing about aquatic invaders, says Johannes Gelinas, commissioner of the environment and sustainable development. "Instead," she says, "the Canadian government has an open-door policy." Ottawa committed itself to developing a strategy for invaders after the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, but the problem just gets worse, not only in the Great Lakes but throughout Canada's land and waters. "These things pose a threat to the Canadian economy on the order of billions of dollars in damage and control costs," says Windsor's MacIsaac. "We're paying a high price for doing nothing," agrees Ricciardi.

Keeping every potential invader out may be impossible. But reducing the numbers and barring the worst ones to minimize the impact would be a smart strategy. Despite two scathing reports by Gidman, contractors from three ministries and interest from individual MPs, there has been little progress, says the commissioner.

If adding this slow-motion ecological train wreck isn't reason enough to take action, the economic consequences of exporting these invaders to other countries ought to be.

In 2000, a U.S. ban on imports of P.E.I. potatoes over a suspected fungal disease cost at least \$22 million in lost sales. And no one in Ontario should forget the five-week "toxic-trawl warning" over SARS—a virus carried from Asia—that stole billions of dollars from the economy. Other new invaders aren't going to wait for us to get our act together, says Ricciardi. And once they've arrived out of control, the environment is changed forever.



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WORDS OF CAUTION

Thinking of buying a home? The best advice is: it may not be a good idea.

THE RATE of real estate is worrying economic and financial forecasters from Alan Greenspan to the lowliest stock analyst. Canada's own housing is the last bubble, and when it bursts the ensuing recession will be the worst since the Depression.

The first home bubble was Noidad. Despite "dead-end houses" reflexes as we've seen recently, the phenomenon of a world of rich snobs has joined Wonderland, Oz and Nirvana in fantasyland. Now was the broad stock market, as investors worldwide responded to the global recession caused by the technology collapse.

Then came the U.S. dollar. Investors who fled from stock into U.S. cash in 2002 were also fleeing from the global state of value isn't what it used to be. Europeans have lost more than one-third on their U.S. deposits and Canadians 15 per cent. Americans are shocked that interest rates on their short-term deposits are microscopic. In Japan ahead of the curve? Japanese bank customers resist safety deposit boxes to fill with cash, because bank accounts pay virtually zero interest and few trust the banks.

What's still left standing amid the rubble of blasted dreams is that core of middle-class aspirants, home ownership. Not just in the U.S., but across the Anglo-Saxon world, the house wins. Housing prices kept about 25 per cent in the U.K. last year and, on an average, only nine per cent in the U.S. Prices have been similarly strong in Canada.

When word gets around that one has written a book about investing, the pace of e-mail seeking for real estate advice grows faster than home growth in North Vancouver. Such investing expertise as there comes from decades managing financial assets, not real estate. All I offer clients are intuitive warnings. Housing prices, like other free-market prices, are driven by supply and demand. Since supply can increase only modestly each year in relation to the total housing inventory (even with housing prices very strong almost everywhere), demand is the crucial driver.

Apart from people switching residences, demand growth basically comes from individuals who qualify for mortgages. They have previously lived with three parents, or rented, or have recently immigrated. To qualify, applicants need financial resources and jobs. That means three factors drive house prices: the change in the number of jobholders relative to the supply of houses, the ability and willingness of buyers to put meaningful amounts of money into a home (usually in preference to keeping it in other assets), and—most crucial of all—mortgage rates. There are some exceptions in highly speculative markets like London's Notting Hill, but what is crucial for most owner-occupiers is not the cost of the real estate, but the size of the monthly mortgage payment.

U.S. house prices took off in 2000 after

WHAT'S STILL left standing amid the rubble of blasted dreams is that icon of middle-class aspirations, home ownership

stock prices and interest rates fell sharply. When people were no longer interested in the dot-com, that they could get rich by owning Noidad stocks, they looked for an asset of last resort: housing was already in a bullish trend and could be acquired with manageable monthly payments. This development came when U.S. house prices had been reasonably firm for years because of the strong economy. The Canadian real estate boom is a carry-over to the U.S. trend, and it could match to a different drummer, but what happens in the U.S. will have a significant impact on the entire global economy, not to mention Canadian investors, even if generalizations are dangerous. (Real estate, as everyone knows, about location, location, location.)

The U.S. experience is unique because

of mortgage interest tax deductibility, and because virtually all home mortgages are open: homeowners can make extra payments any time, or can refinance or pay off the whole loan for their fees. Since rates on government insured loans for 15 and 30 years have fallen from the 7.5 percent range to the five per cent range, nearly all existing loans have been refinanced, and first-time buyers rejoice in finding that they can afford their dream home, even if they have minuscule savings. Many have cashed out their 401(k)s, the employer-sponsored equivalent of RRSPs, paid the income taxes and used the money for a down payment. Why risk keeping money in stocks when you can own an asset that gets more valuable over time—and deduct the interest even on your mortgage tax?

Since the U.S. real estate boom got going, the supply of gainfully employed home buyers has shrunk. That should have cooled out the housing market, except for two factors: the first, which is demographic, applies to the Sun Belt where demand has been strengthening from aging Snow Belts looking to retire north.

The second, and most important price-pressure process, applies to the whole country: the plunge in mortgage rates to 40-year lows. Borrowers must protect even the bubble rich, who are down to their last good asset. High-end homes in Silicon Valley, Vail, Carmel and Palm Springs have stopped levelling, but stay up although the inventory of unsold multi-million-dollar properties keeps rising. Sellers aren't cutting prices, because drops in mortgage rates keep carrying costs low.

So it comes down to two big questions: Will the economy start growing "normally" again, which would send mortgage rates back up to "normal" levels? Will the economy fall into a deflationary recession that will throw millions more out of work and force mortgage foreclosures on a grand scale, hampering housing prices and unleashing a new equity bear market?

The recent run-up in stock prices says stock buyers think there's a good chance of No. 1. The powerful bond rally says bond buyers think there's a good chance of No. 2.

Either way, it would seem, now isn't the smartest time to buy a house. ■

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'I'M JUST A FAN OF MUSIC'

A master manager explains how he takes recording artists to the top

TERRY MCBRIDE might have Canada's best ear for popular music. Sarah McLachlan swears by him. So do the Backstreet Babies—who owe much of the success they've had south of the border to the 45-year-old co-founder and chief executive officer of Nettwerk Music Group. McBride, who manages about 25 artists—including pop star Avril Lavigne—received a lifetime achievement award at the Juno Awards in April. He started the Vancouver-based company in 1994, and helped establish a number of big name acts, including McLachlan, Lavigne, and his latest, Cibo Maté. McBride says his success comes from choosing artists who write their own music, produce songs he likes to listen to and are willing to perform internationally. McBride recently spoke with *Rolling Stone* reporter John Linn about his success, the state of the Canadian industry, file sharing and why boy bands don't fit into his strategy.

What makes you such a good judge of music?
My expertise is not my own personal likes and the likes of my partners, for whatever reason, whether what will be popular. It's not a gift—I've just a fan of music. I was the guy who would slip in the U2 instead of Steady as She Goes at high school parties and almost get killed. I liked Led Zepplin but I thought that there was no rock 'n' roll. My taste in music was always new, so it tended to not be music on the radio. The Clash, Sex Pistols, Echo and the Bunnymen, Joy Division turned out to be some of the most successful bands in the world.

Your management system has been incredibly successful. Why?
We didn't take our money and market groups nationally. The goal was to turn artists into first and then spread the first. So we'd watch 150 different markets for any sign of spots in sales. The group's touring pattern would then follow like a ping-pong ball because we'd keep going after the hot spots. We used to be break in North

McLachlan eight years ago, but we didn't use it to the extent we used to because it's tough now with file sharing and the Internet. You might be getting a lot of radio play and no sales because the kids are in college burning CDs. We still look at it, but it's not the Holy Grail it used to be.

Does file-sharing concern you?

I have no issue with MP3 and file-sharing. I have an issue with the kids who burn CDs and sell them. That's wrong. The parties that are making the money are the cable and telephone companies and the music factories of the CD. It burns the hands in the middle—the artists that could have sold platinum and made a living doing it disappear—the Dave Matthews-type bands. A kid buys in a tent in the corner store where he steals a couple of bags of pop and some junk food. Then he jumps back into the tent and gets the first even though the cable knew what was happening? The cab driver is party to the crime. Kids don't need to pay \$50 a month for a high-speed connection just for e-mail or sending photos. They need it for music files. Cable companies know what's happening and should chip in.

Why didn't you break the growing boy- or girl-band market?

I was a firm believer in the singer-songwriter model and there weren't many songwriters in the '70s and the Britney Spears crowd that were meaningful. It's pre-millennium. The artists were scripted and marketed and didn't write their own material. I believe that someone has to write, record and perform their own music. We stuck with that, and during that big time when everyone was trying to introduce boy and girl bands we were trying to break a little band called Cibo Maté. But there were more years of teen reissues than now it looks like Cibo Maté is the next U2.

What is it that attracts you to new artists?
A lot has to do with the voice. It's unique

There are a lot of great voices, but few unique voices. I'm looking for a melodic hook that I find myself humming two days later and I can't figure out what I'm humming until I hear it. That's what I'm looking for.

Is that what happened with Avril Lavigne?

When we first heard Avril she covered Sarah McLachlan's song *Alibi*, which is a very hard song to cover. Avril called it. She also called *Alibi* by Sex Pistols. We knew she had something, so we sent her down to New York City and she signed with Arista and we walked away. About eight months later she was looking for management and these four guys came from Arista. We weren't ready to jump on it but spent the weekend listening to it. We went like, "Fuck," because you know it when you hear it. We knew we were looking so we had a meeting with her—you just know it.

Is that what you want looking to encourage artists who could only sell 500-1,000 copies. Why not?

Until an artist starts performing at 2,500 and 5,000-seat venues they aren't making any money from touring. Those are the artists that are always beholden to radio. To have a career you have to get beyond that. Radio and retail is an aspect of your career but not the only thing. You need to fill the big stadiums if you're going to make any money.

What about the Tragically Hip and Blue Rodeo? They're revered primarily in the Canadian market and have done well for themselves for quite some time.

It's true that they're very successful inside Canada, which can sustain you to a certain point. But if the world is your stage you can increase the length of your career. Look at Bryan Adams. His popularity in North America is waning but he is still very popular in most of the rest of the world and makes a very good living. Over time his popularity in North America will probably pick up again. He has worked his butt off all around the world and has a career that is more suc-



cessful than the Hip or Blue Rodeo but will also have more longevity. I don't think my band could have inside Canada for more than 10 years without seeing their rise and fall.

Have you seen a change in the amount of talent in Canada over the years?

In the 1960s and 1970s Canadian talent had a much shorter lifespan. Few artists broke into the rest of the world. They were like a huge amount of Canadian talent right now, but it has a lot to do with longevity. People like Celine Dion are not going away. Generations are piling on generations. On

top of the fence, Murray Close, Dean Ryan Adams, generation is the Sarah McLachlan-Alison Mosshart generation. On top of that is the Nelly Furtado-Lavigne generation. Lower-level had their time but were gone pretty quick. These days Canadian artists are sticking around a lot longer, because they're more international than ever.

What do you think about the television show *American Idol* as a vehicle to break new talent into the U.S.?

It's definitely popping. You can get sucked into the show, but it has more to do with the

business of the poor people getting into the games by the judges.

Any regrets over the years?

There are artists I didn't break. Skinny Puppy never actually broke. I learned that you have to watch the personalities you work with. Those guys got so involved with the dogpound of the music scene that their amazing talent turned into these people bashing as one another. The same thing happened with the Grapes of Wrath. I learned I have to pick the right personalities that can go the distance because it is not easy.



ONE TOUGH QUESTIONER

Auditor General Sheila Fraser fears she may be undermining faith in Ottawa

IT WAS THAT METICULOUS Scot, Alexander MacKenzie, who established the venerable post of auditor general. Tinsley and principal, Canada's second prime minister had witnessed a spate of disastrous scandals: the government of Ontario's pension, Sir John A. Macdonald, was obliged to resign after boldly soliciting campaign funds from railway contractors. MacKenzie was determined to do better. In April, 1878, his finance minister introduced legislation to appoint an independent auditor in order to "insure the rendering of public accounts from any interference on the part of the administration." MacKenzie assumed a fierce role in overseeing the accuracy of Ottawa's books from a civil servant, did deputy minister of finance. With no both sides of the House cheered when the legislation passed.

It's a little quieter on the Liberal side these days whenever Auditor General Sheila Fraser produces one of her annual four reports. But MacKenzie would be enormously proud of this dignified Quebec-born descendant of Scottish settlers, the first woman to fill the post. Missing two years into her 10-year term on May 31, the former partner at Ernst & Young Inc. is a dogged, disarming scowler for hard-headed taxpayers. It's a huge job: Ottawa will collect \$183 billion in 2005-2006; it has more than 455,000 employees, including the military. Fraser audits the operations of 40 departments and agencies along with some 44 Crown corporations. She must assure the accuracy of accounts, ensure that businesses spend the money on what Parliament wants—and verify that taxpayers get value for their dollars.

Fraser, 52, as so the ledger born, her grandfather's cousin held the post in the early 20th century. Raised on her family's farm near Valleyfield, Que., she studied commerce at McGill University and became a chartered accountant in 1974. And while Fraser and her husband, accountant Helen Gagnier, raised their three children, she somehow managed Ernst & Young's Quebec City office for 22 years. Along the way,

she picked up valuable lessons. "One of my first partners said, 'You know, they do not pay us for the easy answers,'" she says. Her quiet, glass-walled office overlooking Parliament Hill. "And I was stuck with one—they didn't do pay in at times to disagree with them."

The tough answers are already in evidence. Fraser has thoroughly dissected one of her yearly reports to examine what departments have done in response to the auditor's recommendations. (Previous audits traced follow-ups onto the end of reports.) This week, her look down previously troubled treasury lines includes a guide to how the customs agency is faring in its ongoing struggle to cope with the sensory overload of commercial shipments and new arrivals. "Unfortunately the follow-up never got a lot of attention," Fraser says. "But the real test is

"THE FOLLOW-UPS never got a lot of attention. But the real test is: you raise an issue—now does anybody actually do anything with this?"

as is: you raise an issue—now does anybody actually do anything with this? It is really important that we show if government does respond—or not—and if change occurs—or not."

Expect more tough talks and a stung sheath. Each annual general address themes for her on her term that particularly interests her. Along with the far more staid subjects of accountability to Parliament and an efficient public service, Fraser has chosen the well-being of Canadians, the nation's heritage, and Aboriginal issues. But her, well-being includes security, health and the environment. And that means a long overdue look at how prepared Canada is to fend off terrorist threats. In early April, she reported that the gap between department orders from Canada and confirmed departures has grown to

34,000 individuals over six years. And she warned that border issues are not manageable in a very effective in identifying potentially undesirable visitors at arrival points.

Her other themes are also pertinent. In her November report, Fraser will dedicate a chapter to an often-neglected audit area: Ottawa's management of parks, art collections and historic buildings. "What are we leaving to the next generation?" she asks. Aboriginal issues include an entire housing and economic development. Last year, she reported on four tiny Saskatchewan First Nations that spent thousands of dollars on filing at least 148 reports to comply with requirements from their four major funding groups. Most information was never used. "Would these funds not be better used to deliver front-line services?" she asks.

Such an enviable work life is the share of few. Last year, at Ottawa's behest, Fraser priviled three sponsorship contracts. Her listening report prompted a police investigation. In response, several Liberal MPs muttered darkly about her status. Fraser was shocked. Undeterred, she has launched a governmentwide look at controls for sponsorship, advertising and public opinion research that will also be tabled in November. "They're what you are in the kitchen, you have to learn to make the best," she says. "And the positions we found in those three contracts were so unacceptable that I decided to do it government-wide."

She has also been caught in a government tangle with the Treasury Board in a bid to find a new way to set her budget. The Committee on Public Accounts Committee urged Fraser to do this after some Treasury Board officials, during meetings to discuss her annual spending requests, questioned why she had selected certain topics for audit. "It is inappropriate for the Treasury Board to put a muzzle on the auditor general," says committee chair and Canadian Alliance MP John Williams. "She is extremely effective."

That very effectiveness often disconcerts Fraser: what if her critical reports undermine people's faith in government? "I worry sometimes," she says, "that we can be viewed as feeding into cynicism." No need to fret: Fraser is actually a powerful outside-the-box thinker. Her very existence, the more there is of her scrutiny, boosts confidence in the government's overall management. ■

Mary-Jessie's column reports every other week. mjc@canada.com

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'I've accomplished what I wanted to accomplish'

Canada walked a slow start at the 2000 Winter Olympics, but then Carolee Le May began stepped to the line in the 500-m speed skating final. The flag-bearer delivered a stellar gold, and the Canadian team went on to win a record number of medals. Now, Le May Don is retiring from a remarkable career—the Calgary resident has two gold Olympic medals and one bronze, 12 world championships and the world 500-m record. She intends to concentrate on public speaking and assisting the Vancouver-Whistler bid for the 2010 Olympics, and hopes to start a family with husband Bart Don.

I was talking to my dad earlier this morning, and he said, "It's strange you're 32 and retiring, and I'm in my 60s and still working." For me, it's not that it's ending. It's a new beginning. I still love it, and I will really miss my teammates. But then, I look at what I want to do now and it excites me. In skating,

I've been able to break a little here and there and get results that help me be my best. In this new career, it's going to take a lot of work to get to that point. But that's OK because I like the work and the feeling of getting better at something.

I always wanted to be ranked No. 1, and yet when I got to that point in skating, I realized it didn't matter, or at least not as much as I thought. The important thing was being my best. So now, if not being my best at something else doesn't make me the best overall, I'm OK with that. It's a new world and it's a bit scary, but it's the right time. I talked to all my friends in the sport during the year (don't many?) Sabine Wölter knew this was probably going to be it for me, and she supported that, even back when we were at Salt Lake, because she knows what the pressure's like. It's stressful. She won three medals in three races—that's impressive. Some of the girls figure that if you still

like it and you're making money, why not keep skating? I have no doubt that I can continue to be at the top, and I don't say that in a arrogant way. I just think it's a fact. Trying to win another world championship would be great, and yet it'd just be more of the same. I've accomplished what I wanted to accomplish, so it's time to move on, and to help another generation reach the podium.

What excites me the most about the future? Family. Bart and I are at the point where we're ready to have kids, and every now and then I look at my calendar and wonder, "What would be the right time?" But I know I can't look at it like that. We'll have to adjust to not being able to drop everything and go travelling or whatever, and that's OK. What I've been doing is quite a selfish lifestyle, and there comes a time when you have to put family first. And that's something I really want to do.



Le May Don announced her retirement after 15 years on the national team, and then went home to work in the garden with Bart.

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THE BRAND CALLED 'U'

Hello, students, and welcome to the business of enrolment management

LIKE MOST MOTHERS, I could do a timeline of my son's life as defined by his cell lockables—the stuff that he and his bagging have shared, and I hoarded, from pre-school on up. The quirky and the not-so-quirky from mini-environments of Lego and "Average Ma nent Ninja Battles, through to baseball cards and POKÉ, and on to mp3s.

And now they're at nagan—only this time, the hot new thing is a university offer. Ask any parent managing their rack of the woods, and they can rhyme off their personalized list—no, seven, eight or ten, either, all ming in their bag pocket. Just like those baseball cards: collect one, collect them all!

In a matter of weeks, this will all be over as, one by one, each teenager hits the dead line for choosing their number 1 school. But right now, they're huddled together, shuffling their options—the good and the not-so-good—savouring the moment. And who can blame them? For most, this was the year that fate forgot. A nail-biter of a year, with the largest class in Canadian history landing to university. Anytime when even the brightest among them can't catch on their extracurriculars, they could focus on this.

Take Luan Plasmia, a talented drama major in the elite Clado Watson Arts program at Toronto's Earl Haig Secondary School. This year, Plasmia, who has a 94-per-cent average, dropped virtually everything but his studies. As far as he was concerned, his job was to keep his grades high and find a way to be loved. Like many, he led his friends, applying far and wide. Who said you? King's, Queen's, McGill, Concordia, Ottawa and Carleton. The wild card? The Ivy League's Brown University, which topped the area with a significant scholarship and financial aid package.

Three weeks ago, Plasmia—who has visited every university on his Canadian list but Queen's—decided to check out his American option. He was wistful. "I got a great vibe from the campus. The whole place was the epitome of a liberal arts institution." So, it was off to Brown? He hesitates. "I felt com-

fortable at all the Canadian universities. I could see myself perhaps at McGill. But I'm not sure anything here really grabs me."

And right now, grabbing Luan Plasmia and other smart kids like him—is what it's all about. With so many offers in play, even the most seasoned registrars are uncertain as to what will happen by mid-June. Will they get just the right students, in just the right numbers? It's impossible to predict.

Welcome to the thorny business of enrolment management, part art, part science. Not so long ago, most Canadian universities were passive takers of students. All Canada universities were generally equal, and generally excellent, right? (Actually, wrong.) Then came the huge budget cuts of the 1990s: millions were whipped out of higher education. Confronted by an over-crowded, cash-strapped system—and many out-of-control students and their well-educated parents started to become much more savvy and discerning in university choice.

Smart universities are now devoting considerable energy to understanding their strengths, and devoting more attention to

students' needs. Grabbing the likes of Luan Plasmia is now a competitive business; grabbing brilliant faculty on a hot global market is even tougher. And what both groups are looking for is a genome of engagement and excitement—plus some key deliverables.

Which is why branding—or in many cases re-branding—has gone from being a dirty word to the word of the moment. A strong brand has a Voodoo effect, and it's what many universities now know they're missing. As it stands, only a handful of Canadian universities can boast a well-recognized brand. Waterloo is a perfect example. Recently perceived as an innovative leader in co-op and a hot house of computer wizardry, McGill has a university with huge international cachet.

Recently, the research-intensive University of Ottawa commissioned a survey by Ipsos-Reid and confirmed its own suspicion: its budding reputation lags far behind its performance. Among high school students in Ontario and Quebec, only one in 20 was very familiar with the place. Last week, Ottawa launched the first stage of a major branding campaign, repositioning itself as "Canada's university," a national, bilingual institution offering unique opportunities. Next to them, they have begun to articulate a clear vision and direction. Details to follow. And so we all know, God is in the details.

Similarly, Dalhousie is busy working on its own intensive re-branding exercise, aimed largely at future recruitment. "It's not a case of turning a pig's ear into a silk purse," says president Tom Traves, "but sharpening the understanding of what we do—and how we'll do it. A brand is a promise aimed at a target audience, and you have to live that promise." In Dal's case, living the promise will begin with a considerable investment in enhancing a broad range of student services in the near future—which is smart.

Smart too is McGill's recent purchase of a 16-story hotel, one that will be transformed into a 600-bed residence this fall. Smart because it eliminates the 10-year residence lottery that has cost McGill many gifted students in recent years. Smart because it proves the university is listening to those bright students in any rack of the woods. The ones with the offers in their pockets, who want nothing more than the promise of engagement to be grabbed by the right school. ■

Ann Dowsett Johnston writes Montreal's take to Canadian Universities. ann@annadownett.ca



BARBARIAN DIVERSIONS

Denys Arcand's latest was a gem amid the dire fare at Cannes



SITTING in a beach profile, against a skyline of white yachts anchored off the Côte d'Azur, Denys Arcand remembers first trying to pitch *The Barbarian Invasions*. "It was a battle," he says, recalling how government funding agencies responded to his script, which revolves around a case of terminal cancer. "They said that it was not emotional enough, that it was dry. They said, 'This guy's dying and people are making jokes.' And I said, 'No, no, I don't see it as cynical at all.'"

The 63-year-old director smiles, knowing he has been vindicated. The previous night, at The Barbarian Invasions premiered in competition at the Cannes Film Festival, the team bowed, and amid the applause. At the closing credits, the black-

tie audience treated Arcand and his cast to an eight-minute standing ovation. "I always say, you make the film you can, not the film that you want," muses Arcand. "There's an element of magic. Storytellers are glib and you don't know why."

Sixteen years after igniting his career in Canada with *The Decline of the American Empire*, Arcand is celebrating triumphantly return to form. Decline, his dark ensemble comedy about interlocking families, their sex lives, snuck a chord with a generation that had hit the wall of the sexual revolution in the mid-1980s. With its humane, the same

characters, and some fresh ones, converge around René (Rémy Girard), a once-promising history professor who's divorced and dying. Au Rémy's co-wife and mistress converge at his bedside, his estranged son, Sébastien (Stéphane Rousseau), a wealthy oil trader, moves heaven and earth to rescue him from a hellish hospital ward, and even hires a junkie (Mati-Josef Côté) to administer heroin. Arcand, meanwhile, dispenses a dose of moral reckoning aplaud with mordant satire—his targets include Canada's health-care system, the "farm" of the series, and the death of history.

But his film also serves as a moving elegy to a generation still delirious modern Quebec and has seen its pastures rendered

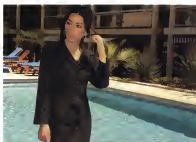
The Barbarian crew with Rousseau, Lévesque, Arcand and Girard (center), Côté (right)

obscene. After two frustrating detours into English-language cinema (*Love and Human Remains* and *Sardonyx*), Arcand, the son-don of Quebec cinema, has gone back to his roots. In his home province, where *Barbarian Invasions* has grossed \$2 million in just two weeks, he's being hailed as a homecoming hero. And in Cannes last week, his movie emerged as one of the strong picks among 20 features in the main competition. Variously called frenzied "ball-boddy, kinky and gloriously unapologetic." Near the end of the festival, critic Roger Ebert said, "It might be the best movie I've seen in Cannes." And it's the best of Arcand's career. Gliding from comedy to pathos, it's a reminder of wit and compassion, a film that resonates sublimely with his Québec, with our decline—and with the dark mood of world cinema at the 55th Cannes Film Festival.

This year's festival offered the first generation of films to clearly reflect the fallout from Sept. 11. The program was dominated by movies about massacre, suicide and social ruin. Movies about waiting for something dreadful to happen. *Barbarian Invasions* crystallized those themes, and turned out to be the one film that provided some release. It didn't just make us think it made us laugh and cry. And in the aftermath of the Iraq war, it provided a sobering sense of perspective.

Cannes is the Olympics of world cinema—an oasis of art lined up against the Hollywood superpower. And this year, the American presence seemed muted. But everywhere you looked, the American Empire was the elephant in the room. You saw it, most literally, in *Elephant*, Gus Van Sant's coldly detached meditation on the Columbine massacre. You could see it in *Dogville*, Lars von Trier's shattering fable of America as a pathologically intolerant small town that tortures Nicole Kidman's mysterious fugitive. It lurked in the unapologetic violence of Clint Eastwood's *Wyatt Rides Again*, watched *Quentin and Pulp* in the afternoon—two intensely moving dramas filled with non-professionals in the ruins of Afghanistan—you couldn't help but be reminded of America's military adventures in the Middle East.

And you could feel history cut a chilling light on recent events in *The Fog of War*, Errol Morris's engrossing documentary about former U.S. Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara—an 87-year-old Hermitic Alger-



Schwarzenegger, with wife Maria Shriver, promoting *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (top)

standing over his role at the helm of the most lethal military machine in history. McNamara pondered firebombing 100,000 Tokyo civilians to death on a single night during the Second World War. He marched at the sheer back of averting nuclear war during the Cuban Missile Crisis, and he takes us through the escalating folly of Vietnam. "He's the last surviving member of Camelot," says Morris, who says his movie is a tragedy that also "What if a good man, a decent man, blundered into something horrendous and was unable to stop it or himself?"

Meanwhile, on the Croisette, a mob of fans

watches Arnold Schwarzenegger strut across a *Terminator 3* set in front of the Carlton Hotel. "I'm back!" Arnold proclaims as he shows off various gun-wielding robots from the *Terminator* franchise. "That is the capital of protection of movies," he boasts, perhaps justly setting foot in posterized France. Promising "mass effects and stunts that you've never seen before," Arnold works the crowd like a Vegas-style salesman.

In Cannes, however, Hollywood stars are a sideshow, the real carnival is onscreen. We don't come here for the furthest and the farthest, but for things we've never seen

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before. And there were plenty of those—the murderer with the pen jellyfish in Japan's *Bright Future*, the man with a wart that grows to giant proportions in India's *Arjun*, and the close-up of a house fly crawling around Tilda Swinton's nipple in Young Adam. *Beats* correctly placed high on the Cannes menu, as usual. The new intrigue of Young Adam, which won on the barge canals of Scotland, features an abusive scenario in which Dorn McGonagall slanders Emily Mortimer with natural, lurching and anger. The belling but beautiful Parker and Ann, by Russian director Alexander Sokolov, without a parental relationship charged with homoerotic innuendo. And older women in the new emerged as a notable trend. In *Swimming Pool*, 59-year-old Charlotte Rampling—playing a mystery author who makes a nympholepsy her muse in a French country house—lies back and allows the cameras to roam the length of her nude form. Anecdotes from the chaperon, 64-year-old Anne Reid, got naked in *The Mother*, in which she plays a grandparent who has a torrid affair with her daughter's boyfriend. "When I was 30 I would have been happy to take my clothes off," she says. "But nobody asked me. Now I'm going to make an out."

Among the competition entries, the token scandal was *The Brown Bunny*, a stupefying first of self-absorption written, directed, photographed and edited by Vincent Gallo (*Buffalo 66*). The film ends with a scene of unmitigated, and unprotected, fellatio performed on Gallo by Chloë Sevigny, a dubious headmark in American cinema. But first you have to sit through an almost wordless hour and a half of Gallo driving across America, with long, uncut shots of the camera gazing through a bug-splattered windshield. Perhaps, the most thrilling moment was not the fellatio at the end of the road, but the moment in the midwest when the windshield blurred with rain, and Gordon Lightfoot's *Beautiful* came on the soundtrack.

The Brown Bunny was the most indulgent example of a road toward long, meditative takes. A critic's favorite was the Turkish feature *Distant*, a meticulous portrait of male escort in which virtually nothing happens. Van Sant, known for mainstream movies like *To Die For* and *Good Will Hunting*, used *Megaphone* to make the experimental window he recently opened with *Gerry*. Casting students with no acting experience, he staged long, meandering shots of



Kiefer appeared with an American provocateur was Terry Adkins Brady adding to the Hollywood star power that was very much in evidence on Cannes' main drag, the Croisette

them walking down high school corridors through a series of random, overlapping encounters. Conjoining a sense of youth aimlessly adrift, Van Sant puts the viewer inside the school. He ends the film with a chilling Columbine-like massacre, making an attempt to explain the carnage behind it or isolate the horror with sentiment.

Several directors are using non-professional actors and documentary devices to create a savagely poetic cinema. One is Iran's Siamak Nafizadeh, who shot *At Five in the Afternoon* in the rubble of Kabul. He recruited the cast from the streets. The

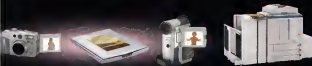
lead, 23-year-old Afghani Rezaie, oval-ot's come to Cannes because she had three children to care for back home, and their father had gone missing in the war. In making the hard *Caravans*, based on the true story of 1992's São Paulo prison massacre, Brazil's Hector Babenco (*First of the Spider Women*) drew some of his cast from the streets.

Of all the films in competition, the most audacious was *Dogville*. Striding through its three hours was an unusual ordeal. Although the film is set in a Rocky Mountain hamlet, von Trier shot it in Sweden on a stage with no sets, and virtually no props, just



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thick marked outlines of these faces, walls and streets would be. And with the plummy diction of a host from Masterpiece Theatre, John Hurt's narration crowns the dialogue. The movie unfolds like a masterful coupling of John Steinbeck and Thornton Wilder in a Brechtian third circle. It's a grace-Catholic fable of the Fall set in a spiritual twilight zone.

With Dogville, the director behind the Degree of violence of *Disturbia* returns as swing to the other end of the spectrum. And after nurturing Stanley Kubrick, *Red-mountain* follows under the spell of another true Hollywood provocateur, who plays his characters under a slow, searching magnifying glass. Dogville is a shaggy dog story, and it can be profoundly irritating. But just as we're wondering if non-Tier is struggling about in the emperor's new clothes, Dogville sinks its teeth. By the time David Benoit's Young Americans looks off the dating and its, over historic photos of faces from *Dust Bowl* refugees to the blacks who populate America's prisons, you feel something as unforgettable as been burned into your brain.

In a festival of exceptionally dark fare, it fell to Canada to lighten things up, and all the Canadian features hailed from Quebec. The *Duoceux*'s *Fortnight* closed with *Les Grands dévotions*, a charming comedy filmed on a remote island in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Reminiscent of *Waking Ned Devine*, it's about

IN A FESTIVAL of exceptionally dark fare clearly reflecting the fallout from Sept. 11, it fell to Canada to offer solace and lighten things up

unemployed fishermen who congregate to hook a Montreal doctor into setting up practice in their village—a condition for building a factory. Incongruously, this Quebec comedy (David Ives) is an ardent underdog farce, as the islanders pretend they adore the game, and build a wacky cricket pitch on the sloping rocks. A first feature from Montreal's Jean-François Perreault, who

makes TV commercials, *La Grande dévotion* offered a refreshing diversion from the austerity of sateur cinema.

And aside from *Barbarian Invasions*, one of the biggest crowd-pleasers in the main selection was an animated feature, *Belleville* by Benoit-Yves. This Canada-France-Belgium co-production comes from French-born writer-director Sylvain Chomet, who has lived in Montreal since 1993. It's the black-humoured story of a grandmother who rides a pushbike across the Atlantic to rescue her grandson, who's been kidnapped by Marlin while cycling in the Tour de France. Deconstructing in *Belleville*—a surreal amalgam of Manhattan, Montreal and Quebec City—the story is told by a series of musical vignettes from the '30s. With dazzling originality and the delicious spirit of *Utopia* (Bertrand's) past, *Belleville* is a sophisticated cartoon that leaves Disney in the dust. The screen chronicles on a fictional of the Jacques Cartier Bridge in Montreal. And, like *Barbarian Invasions*, this was a film that bridged the two cultures of art and entertainment with finesse. **B**

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TO TURIN WITH MOUNTIES

Canadian literature—with a little help from Ottawa—is sizzling hot in Italy

CANADA IS a dangerous place in the collective memory of Turin. Stylized Molotov warriors loom menacingly over the frozen snows of the northern Italian city's 306-year-old Palazzo Congressi. Formed in solid brick, they represent the wild realizations of Italian soldiers who fought in New France's 17th-century French wars. Plus ça change. For the 50-odd Canadian writers, publishers, public servants and journalists who went to Italy in mid-May to see Canadianism at Turin's annual international book fair, it seemed a toss-up—for the Toronto contingent, at least—whether they'd be welcomed as literary ambassadors or shunned as lethal invaders. At the airport met by protective vans that seemed designed for handling plutonium, greeted passengers from Ottawa with electronic thermometers and searching gazes. Even a protester clad in a gas mask and who briefly seized the microphone at the fair's opening—the latter to tell firmly phoning sloganist Cardinal Severino Poletto, archbishop of Turin—also wore a SARS mask, presumably because he knew there were Canadians present. Thank God the mad cow movie wasn't out yet.

But it's doubtful even the belated plague could have dented the CanLit express in Turin. Canadian writing, it was puffed by a decade of Ottawa's promotion abroad, is trending hot in Italy. At the Canada booth, Italians were excited by the personal appearance of nearly two dozen Canadian authors—especially Yann Martel, Alvin Karpis and North Weller (representing the 80th percent ghost of his father, Montcalm)—and the not-to-be-dispersed presence of two starlet-fied Mounties. RCMP officers Yves Martin and François Lebel drew what can only be called gazes in large clusters—readers and gawkers alike—many of them members of the various Italian police forces. The mountie stunts ended with two park rangers in equally red coats. “So you two are mountain police,” one said in lightly accented English. “Montaldi,” replied Lebel after a beat. “We ride horses.”

Turin bookseller Graziella Fontana,



who had the concession at the Canada booth, was delighted with his sales. “Everything is going twice as much as at any other booth,” he beamed. “I was not expecting such success.” Particularly not after his bad experience the last time he tried to sell books from the fair's inaugural mission. “Two years ago the Dutch books didn't move well at all. But this year all 2,000 books I brought in went, even children's titles—which are not big sellers in Italy—not just the big names like Atwood and Doody.” Most Canadians would be puzzled by Fontana's second “big name,” but Margaret Douglas, a Canadian resident who teaches at University of Notre Dame in Indiana, was an enormous success in Italy—and Fontana's personal favourite—for her three mystery novels set in ancient Greece and featuring Aristotle as her detective.

Why Canada—literary quality and Mountie

drawing power aside—is such a hot site of converging agendas. One factor is the cult of Barney, an ongoing love affair with Barney's Version. Marcello Richieri's last novel has been heavily promoted by Effe, a conservative newspaper that heartily approves of Richieri's politically incorrect hero. And there is, according to many Italian critics, a wariness with the highly formalized national literature. “Historically, Italian writers dwelt at the court of the prince,” remarks Romano Ferrero, the fair's editorial director. “And that has remained Italian's conventionalization addressed to an elite. The best Canadian books are necessary books—you understand what I mean? They have something to say in Italy most books are unnecessary, they're about the author's ego.”

Maybe so, but in personal terms, nothing beats Ottawa's seed money, which has been

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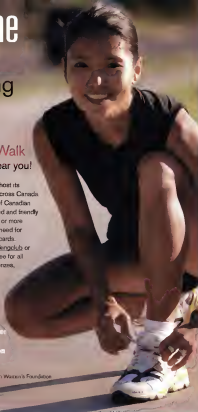
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astonishingly successful for a modest cost. About \$50,000 a year has fostered a network of Canadian Studies departments at seven Italian universities. There are now dozens of academics interested in the country, according to University of Milan professor Luigi Bruni Liberti. The co-author of a history of Canada that has sold 5,000 copies in Italy, Bruni Liberti says his countrymen are increasingly intrigued by Canada because of what he delicately calls "new situations."

By that he means Italy's combination of a shrinking birth rate and increased immigration from Muslim North Africa. The question of immigration is becoming critical, he acknowledges, and Canada represents one possible future. "Your society is so complicated," says Bruni Liberti. "So many different cultures co-existing without real conflict." And then there is the endless tide of U.S. pop culture—John Grisham is as popular in Italy as he is in North America. "We know that Canada is always particularly susceptible to being Americanized, and we appreciate the effort it makes to prevent it."

Bruni Liberti's wife, Elisabetta Turbia, a journalist at *Panorama*, Italy's largest circulation (650,000) weekly magazine, is most impressed with the Canadian government's efforts abroad. "There include subsidies that pay half the costs of foreign translations. Italy is the biggest beneficiary, receiving about a fifth of the annual \$400,000 budget supplied by the Canada Council and Foreign Affairs. "There's nothing like the Canada Council here," she says wistfully. "In Italy all sponsorship is political, but to us outsiders Canada is like a dream, a culture that offers a chance to any writer to express himself or herself, that promotes solely on merit."

It can be mortally embarrassing to hear Italian conversationalists scribble verses to Canada that we don't actually possess ("real technical literature from a land that has never known slavery or racism.") But there is malice in the honey too, though not directed towards it. It appears in the Italian left's anti-Americanism to portray Canada as the "other" North America, the kinder, gentler one. And Ferraro hardly troubles to hide the fact that one motive behind collaborating Canada—and Deane's support for Carlin—is to lobby his own government for more money for writers and publishers. "Canada is a model for the world."

But that model is export driven. The



Canadian writers in Turin: Fiorika, Gerdie Florentino-David, Jeffrey Moore, Ernie Hayden Taylor, Nana Kiki and Boody (right) Medved in the busy Canada booth

money is for Canadians to attain global reach, not the reverse. One of the ironic outcomes is that Canadians—whose before is lauded for its openness to the world—do not share European readers' familiarity with foreign literature. That's something that bothers Alister MacLeod, one of the most prolific writers at Turin. "There I am," he says, "in constant contact with writers who know my work very well, and say very nice things about it, and I can't get translation copies of their books. I feel bad about that."

And it's hard to imagine any small Canadian consistently creating something like the extraordinary literary prize offered by the Italian town of Castel Goffredo (population 10,000). Every year for the past decade, a local cooperative has picked a country,

named the prize books and awarded up 135 copies of each. Then the citizens start reading it summer and they award the Acqui prize, named for 19th century diplomat and writer Giuseppe Acqui. Castel Goffredo's most eminent native son, Jaco Ferraro won a special prize for *The Glass Bead Game*. It's not a lucrative honour—US\$750 and a trip to Italy—Jac's one from a town. "It's an extraordinary thing to go into a town, in a foreign country, one you'd hardly be likely to stumble over yourself, and find every one there has read your damn book."

Over the past decade Canadian literature has been celebrated and welcomed with open arms around the world. Perhaps one day Chatelaine returned the favour.



MORE THAN A MOUNTAIN

Fifty years after climbers first reached its summit, Everest is still an inspiration

APRIL 29, 2001 6,462 ft up Mount Everest. I woke with a start at the stroke of midnight to what I thought was the end of the world—or at least the collapse of the world's tallest mountain. Instead, it was the loud air thundering I'd ever heard—during an incredibly windy moment. A succession of terrifying disaster.

I was on my second ascent of Everest, this time with my friends, Leo and Dorji Kelly. As not often be the case, death awaited the expedition. Five hours after the storm, I heard the unmistakable sounds of sobbing through the thin nylon walls of my tent. I went to our mess tent at advanced base camp where I found the most emotional Sherpa I'd ever encountered: "What's the matter, Dorji?" I asked in my best broken Sherpa. "You're not still afraid of the thunder, are you?" He was too distraught to respond, so our cook, Shyam, intervened. "Is not possible," he said. "The god may be dead." The "god" in this case was Babu Chiri, an Everest legend. The 35-year-old Sherpa—who had climbed the hellfrozen mountain 10 times, scaled it faster than anyone, and survived without bottled oxygen on the 8,850-m-high summit longer than anyone—had set out from camp the day before, and had not returned.

Dorji, Shyam, and I madly rushed out in search of him, only to discover we were too late. Climbers from Babu's team had spotted his boot at the bottom of a 12-m crevasse, his body below, bent in impossible directions. Normally, the remains would have been left there, but this victim's body was different. To the masses in Kathmandu, Babu was the equivalent of John F. Kennedy. Michael Jordan and the Pope combined, and as such he deserved a heroic send-off.

Sherpas believe it is a bad luck to touch the dead, so I was called upon, along with friends from Great Britain, the U.S., and Argentina, to assist in the grisly task of recovering the body from the rock in the ice. It was incredibly sobering, and for the moment, I decided my trip was over. Still, despite his

experience, Babu had taken a shortcut and had done so alone and without looping in radio contact. I woke up the next day realizing I could learn from his mistake, and decided to commence ascending the Kellys in their dream to reach the summit.

I looked like we might never get the chance. For three weeks, we waited out the worst weather in over 30 years. It finally cleared out, with only dips remaining on our permit; we found ourselves at the infamous Hillary Step, the last major obstacle before the summit. Imagine climbing straight up the corner of a seven-story building, which is only 30 cm wide in certain sections. Fall to your left, and it's 2,400 m to the camp in Nepal; drop to your right, and it's a quick trip to Tibet—three kilometers straight down. Creak the temperature down to -49° C and magnify the UV levels 10 times so that exposed skin burns as if from a blowtorch. Add a jet stream wind with ice pellets, suck out two-thirds of the oxygen, and perch yourself higher than most planes fly. That's a little of what the Step is like—and then there's a series of seven false summits before you reach the top.



Hillary's 1953 photo of Norgay at the peak

Nearly 300 climbers have died in the effort. Scaling Everest may be the most taxing feat—physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. But that's exactly why we do it: It's under these incredibly stressful circumstances that we learn so much, and, we hope, return home with increased skills and attitudes to truly make a difference.

The new alone makes the experience invaluable. The apex of the planet is the size of a coffee table, as if just to the east, a surreal Tibetan sunrise shows the colors of the spectrum from the horizon to the horizon. To my left, Everest's symmetrical black pyramidal mass is shrouded in the Nepalese Himalayas, now appearing to glacially islands punching through seas of cloud. Looking up, despite the hour of the day I see nothing but black. This is both the furthest from heaven help and the closest to outer space I will ever be.

On May 24, 2001, the earth was heading in every direction below my feet. I was relaxed, relieved, and anxious to return home to Calgary. That day, I was humbled and honored to become the only Canadian to reach the summit twice (my first time was on May 13, 1999). But I certainly was not the first to complete the climb. On May 29, 1953, a previously unknown New Zealand bookkeeper and a small Nepalese climber became the first two people to reach the summit. Since then, 81 Edward Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay, who died in 1986, have inspired generations of climbers—and, for that matter, many others with seemingly impossible dreams. In October 1980, Leslie Skender and Pat Moore became the first and second Canadians to accomplish the feat. But it came at a terrible cost: a cameraman and three Sherpas died on that expedition. Since then, only 20 Canadians have been on top of the world (two more are currently attempting the climb). That makes for an extremely select group, considering more than 300 Canadians have won Olympic gold medals.

And the next 50 years? The world's highest mountain will doubtless still did before, fuel the dreams and passions of those who strive to not the limit of human athletic potential, and inspire others to continue toward their own personal and professional Everest. □

David Rodney is a keynote speaker and tour guide. To connect: davidrodney@comcast.ca

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CLOSING NOTES



ETIQUETTE | 64

Here comes the courteous drink

Albion's local party members here are sure to be on hand to make the big day less stressful



PEOPLE | 66

And now for something serious

These days, there's a little less mentoring around for the former dancer/poet/actor. The L.A.-based performer has a dramatic new role in the Korean production of *And the Winner Takes All*. And at home, he's interested in exactly academic in nature



Listings | Bard & beer

Stand on the beach
June 21 Sept. 21

View extraordinary productions of Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Merchant of Venice* and the rarely seen epic *Poetics*, *Power of Love* at Vancouver's new outdoor beach art theatre

Franklin & Franklin
of One Act Plays
By Women

June 17-25

This month features the most of seven established and emerging Canadian playwrights as well as dramatic workshops

www.groovecity.com/artsandculture/performing-arts/

Heart and Stroke Foundation's

Recall Ride for Heart

June 2

More than 10,000 participants are expected at the 10th annual charity cycling event. Riders and on-line donors can choose from six of four routes between

live and 10,000

www.heartandstroke.ca/heartandstroke

Toronto

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June 15

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Montreal

Music | The power of positive percussion

Drummer Dale Marcell has a tough job on his hands. His blindness, most of whom have Alzheimer's disease, are sitting the motion in a circle, staring blankly into the air. Marcell plays a drum, tenor, bass, bell or African gourd filled with beans in the laps of the 30 Wrentham Park nursing home residents in Kitchener, Ont. He then beats a poppy rhythm on his own drum. Suddenly, the circle comes alive. "I've never met a group that couldn't join," says Marcell, 48. "As soon as we begin, they get caught up."

Born and raised on a farm on the St. Lawrence in Ontario, Marcell, whose of Métis descent, has always been drawn to the use of drumming in Aboriginal cultures for emotional and spiritual healing. He at-

tributes his survival from child abuse and teenage drug use to his own drumming, which he learned as a young boy. Eight years ago, Marcell, then a professional percussionist with several rock bands, took a break from performing day to night as he suffered in a car accident. During that time, an elementary school teacher asked him to drum with two students who had a serious defect disorder. After just one session, the kids became less disruptive and Marcell found a new direction for his career.

DETAILS
For more information on drumming workshops, visit www.dalemarcell.com

Today, Marcell has a more active schedule of workshops in senior homes, prisons and shelters for battered women as well as programs for kids with physical and cognitive disabilities. "The power of creating music has been taken away from a lot of people," says Marcell. "I think of myself as a drumming guide—helping people see only the best they were born with."

BY NANA MICHIELSEN



Etiquette | How to make it a nice day for a white wedding

An wedding bells ring, stress levels rise—especially for brides and bridesmaids. They organize the flowers and showers and, inevitably, something goes wrong on the Big Day—whether it's not wine on the gown or the groom's ex showing up to produce her wedding vows. To keep the dream from dissolving into a nightmare, follow the advice of Toronto-based etiquette guru (and co-authors of *The Fabulous Groom's Guide to A Guide to Groom's Under Pressure*) Gert Marsh and Kim Loas. "Certainly, weddings inspire strong emotion. We've all seen the drama that can ensue," says Marsh, before adding half-seriously, "We're in favour of eloping."

But for those involved in a more traditional affair, Loas, in her early 30s, and Marsh,

35, list do's and don'ts you will see you through. A good bridesmaid keeps a rose stem (two minutes) and may pretty much never burn. She never complains about her tulle dress and she is on time for every thing. Likewise, a bride releases her maid from attending the boys of wedding showers or from buying gifts for each one. She also tries to remain sane. "Brides have a tendency to get very, very self-absorbed," says Loas, who has been in so wedding parties. "Bridesmaids are not employees, they're friends."

The most important thing? "Be a good guest," says Marsh. "Weddings can be tedious, despite the best efforts of the bride. Dedicate to the couple (chicken dinner). Help your friend out and have fun." AMY CAMERON

Diversions | Michael Redhill

What if the Toronto-based author (*Ukulele*) liked BOOKS: MICHAEL CALLAN, by Alan Warner. "It was a find for me, boyhood after he hit *Harriet*, but just leaves the body and carries on with life. It's written in the first person and it's a voice like no other in fiction." CD: PEDRO MENA, by Carlos Vives. "He's Brazil's Frank Sinatra. His song 'Tere' is one of the most beautiful belted I've ever heard!"



Books | How Rabelaisian

It's not exactly an enviable lot, but Douglas Glover is probably the most envied unknown Canadian writer alive. The author of four novels, four short-story collections and a book of essays, Glover is a critic's favourite, a former Governor General's Award finalist, and a past \$5 jury member himself. His often cited literary criticism has appeared in newspapers in Canada and abroad. So why haven't you heard of him?

"Oh, I'm just a natural outsider," says Glover, 54, who was born on a tobacco farm near Simcoe, Ont. "I've always been a wanderer, and chosen outside the structures that support writers in Canada." Now he's a literary advisor, having moved up in northern New York state a decade ago to be closer to his American cousin and their two boys. Not that Glover, who remains deeply committed to his native land, truly has been either. At Windsor College, where he teaches creative writing, Glover laughs, "I'm infamous for publicly losing my temper at Canadian jokes."

Then there's the witless, shrill, knotty, intelligent, often raucously funny and always experimental, Glover's world are rarely the stuff of bestsellers. But his 2001 novel, *The Life and Times of Captain A.L. in Canada* (CANAL BOOKS), and his newest, *Old (Good Land)*, a just as good, in it Glover tells a story that's both Rabelaisian—Rabelais himself appears—and a serious meditation on Native-Canadian interaction. "When the New and the Old Worlds meet, first we exchange corpses," reads the last sentence of the novel's opening section. (It's based on the real-life figure of Marguerite de la Rivière, who accompanied her uncle on a failed French attempt to colonize Quebec in 1540, based on her fragmentary diary, *Journal de la Rivière*.)

Like at its best, though, after the initial exchange of germs and toxic goods, musket balls and arrows, when Glover depicts the Aboriginal white meeting in miniature through his narrative and folk, the Native hunter who plunders over her. The fallout from the earliest encounters, Glover believes, still marks the country's unsettled relationship with its first Nations. "After we slowly meet another," he says, "as soon as they start to translate each other, confusion reigns." BRIAN BETHUNE



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People | Daydream believer—and a quantum physicist?

These days, Micky Dolenz is pretty well-known from his former, longhaired days as a Monkee. Mind you, that was 35 years—and a full head of hair—ago. Currently, the L.A.-based performer is busy in Toronto playing Zeev in the Ethan Johns and Tim Rice musical *Aida*. Dolenz, 58, recently sat down to focus some questions started by Maclean's Research Reporter John Irluke.

IF I could sing... I would have probably done something in the sciences. I love quantum physics.

My favourite Chevy character is... the 'Prod

MacMurray character (Prod, 'Brazilard') in *The Absent-Minded Professor*. I'm a wannabe inventor and traded gravity for a long time.

Partying with the Beatles... or actually just meeting them, was a great moment in my life. I was such a huge fan. I met Paul first and had to fight off asking for his autograph. It spent a lot of time with Ringo and a little bit with John. They were all very gracious.

My favourite rock 'n' roll artist of all time

If things had gone differently, Dolenz might have been a Hendrix-loving inventor.

...is Jimi Hendrix. He was the spouse of rock guitars. He was a better musician than people realize. His theories were great and his technique was amazing. He was one of the opening acts for the Monkees.

A sense of humour... is not just about laughing. It's about having a sense of irony.

If I could be anyone for a day I'd be... Richard Feynman. He was a famous Nobel Prize-winning physicist who was on the Presidential Commission after the Challenger space shuttle crashed.

The most important lesson I learned as a Monkee... was to get a good lawyer.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHER NIXON

Books | Future uncertain

Hard on the heels of Margaret Atwood's dystopian novel *Gryns and Gryn* comes its non-fiction equivalent, *Our Final Hour* (HarperCollins), by no less an eminent scientist than England's astronomer royal, Sir Martin Rees. The title doesn't quite say it all—Rees does give the human race a 99-50 chance of surviving the 21st century. All the usual suspects are highlighted: natural disasters; human-caused climate changes; either deliberate or accidental ("terror or error," in Rees's words); superintelligent machines run amok. But Rees adds a few eye-popping scenarios, including particle accelerator experiments that have the potential, in the minds of some physicists, to destroy not just the planet but space itself. It's those utterly improbable events that bring Rees to the most intriguing portions of his book, where he discusses the role of the Internet in publishing dangerous information and urges scientists to consider the potential downside of their work.



BESTSELLERS

Fiction

	LAST WEEK
1. SPY AND DEAR , Mary Jane Jacob (3)	1
2. THE UNWIT , Michael Ross (10)	2
3. THE KILLERS' TYPING SCHOOL FOR MEN , Lawrence Sanders (1)	3
4. THE ANATOMY OF DOUBT , Barbara Ehrenreich (5)	4
5. THE KING OF TIBET , Jonathan Lethbridge (13)	6
6. THE CURSE OF THE WOLF , Barbara Smith (10)	7
7. THE WINDS OF WINTER , J.R. R.R. (10)	8
8. A BURNING OF ENEMIES , Michael Chabon (1)	9
9. THE WINDS OF WINTER , J.R. R.R. (10)	10
10. THE WINDS OF WINTER , J.R. R.R. (10)	11
11. THE WINDS OF WINTER , J.R. R.R. (10)	12
12. THE WINDS OF WINTER , J.R. R.R. (10)	13

Non-fiction

1. THE WINDS OF WINTER , J.R. R.R. (10)	1
2. THE WINDS OF WINTER , J.R. R.R. (10)	2
3. THE WINDS OF WINTER , J.R. R.R. (10)	3
4. THE WINDS OF WINTER , J.R. R.R. (10)	4
5. THE WINDS OF WINTER , J.R. R.R. (10)	5
6. THE WINDS OF WINTER , J.R. R.R. (10)	6
7. THE WINDS OF WINTER , J.R. R.R. (10)	7
8. THE WINDS OF WINTER , J.R. R.R. (10)	8
9. THE WINDS OF WINTER , J.R. R.R. (10)	9
10. THE WINDS OF WINTER , J.R. R.R. (10)	10

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